MARCH 1966

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-ONE, NUMBER THREE

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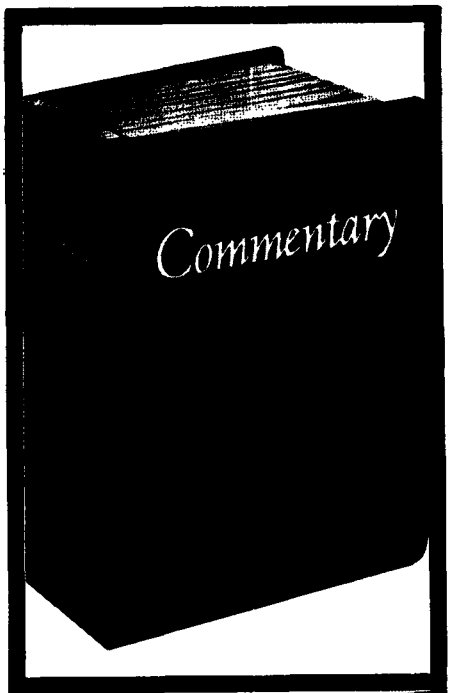

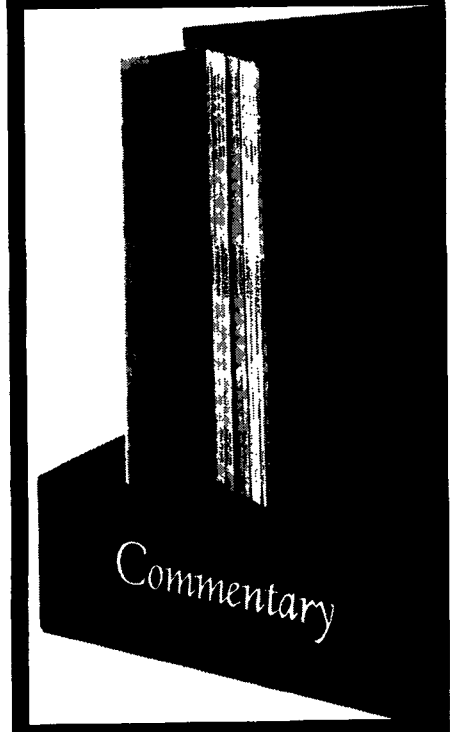

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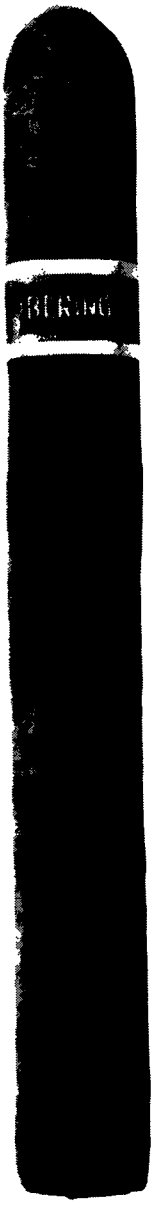

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The New Biology

To the Editor of Commentary:

As an amateur of biology and the other sciences I am grateful to Marjorie Grene for her essay on Adolf Portmann ["Beyond Darwinism," November '65]. To borrow one of her favorite words, Portmann seems particularly *authentic* as a spokesman for Swiss science working at Basel, the city of Burckhardt and Nietzsche. His leading notions of autonomy, hierarchy, visibility, self-expression and the importance of the "inner life" of nature seem to spring directly from Swiss soil. After a second reading of *New Paths in Biology* (1964), I'm also grateful for the economy and clarity of his writing, his obviously vast and meticulous laboratory experience.

Mrs. Grene, however, seems to me guilty of one serious distortion. Nowhere in *New Paths*—which one can assume to embody his latest thinking—does one encounter the words "authentic" or "inauthentic," words given a strong emotional charge two decades ago by the polemics around existentialism. Lionel Trilling notes in *Beyond Culture* that these are museum curators' words, and I rather suspect they gained their initial charge from the great sums of money that hung on their utterance or non-utterance in the age of Berenson and Duveen. They also lend themselves to a certain guttural emphasis meant to bring one's opponent up short and adjourn the argument to realms of emotion. The adjectives actually used by Portmann are a good deal more neutral: "addressed" and "unaddressed," "direct" and "indirect" phenomena.

In a sense, of course, Portmann continues the strain of biological speculation that came to a head in Bergson's philosophy, which can be considered a polemic against Galileo's division of the world into primary and secondary qualities. But there is a significant departure in Portmann, as in most modern biologists, from this mystical-aesthetical tradition. He emphatically rejects earlier notions of the primacy of the cell, both as science and political metaphor:

> Comparing society with the "cell state," many biologists found that individual cells were far more disciplined than individual men and played a far greater part in ensuring the welfare of the whole. Thus, what had been a biological oversimplification became a means of suppressing the freedom of the individual—the cell state became the dictator's ideal.

The exciting new element in Portmann's thinking for the layman is his tracing of the interaction of nucleus and cytoplasm, the sometimes equal importance of nucleoplasm and cytoplasm in determining structure and behavior. Not only the cell but the cell nucleus has been demoted. The brain itself as a directing mechanism shares in a general dispersion and decentralizing of interest from the cellular to the "apparative" state. What, Portmann asks, about the flatworm, *Planaria,* which, when cut in two, becomes two worms, each complete with a head and brain?

I would suggest that Portmann's book teaches a somewhat different lesson than the assault on mechanism that Mrs. Grene reads into it. He does, in his last chapter, have a go at various neo-Darwinian narrowings and hardenings of the master's highly tentative theories. But essentially his temper is conciliatory and inclusive—for a very good reason. Neither physics nor biology needs any longer to lean on the increasingly sterile old opposition between mechanism and organicism. The fear of humanists that a purely mechanical view of natural process would eventually eliminate mystery altogether has proved to be wholly unfounded. The subject, from DNA on "up" to Portmann's puzzles of self-expression and apparative autonomy, is saturated in mystery, so much so, indeed, that a close student cannot help switching rapidly back and forth between an organic and mechanistic philosophy of nature, finding equal comfort in both. It is virtually impossible to enter the field without keeping the two in some sort of complementary balance.

Portmann, to be sure, leans on Goethe, "a particularly keen explorer of all that is 'destined to become manifest,'" but quickly adds that Goethe's morphological-

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aesthetic aproach is "one of many possible paths that lead across a wide field." If you mean to be aesthetic and explore with Portmann some features of form and color in birds, snakes, and snails that seem quite unrelated to selection or survival, you are not justified in drawing the line there, at the point where poetry and biology seem most obviously to walk together in fondness for the gratuitous. Many even more spectacular phenomena *do* contribute to survival. And many "indirect" and "unaddressed" phenomena visible only in microscopes or not visible at all stimulate the sense of beauty as much as do the others.

If all this remains stubbornly hidden to the layman, perhaps the appropriation of biology by the romantic movement and various of its more shady offshoots is chiefly responsible. For myself I don't know anything more likely to heal the artificial schism between romantic and classical ideas of nature than modern biology, equally dependent as it is on the rigors of classical physics from Galileo to the present and on every sympathy the poets can arouse.

R. W. FLINT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If... Marjorie Grene and Adolph Portmann seek to challenge... the mechanistic tenets of Darwinism, it is fair to expect that their mastery of the principles they hope to challenge is thorough. . . . It was, therefore, with some astonishment, that I read Marjorie Grene's example of the body of the sea snails as a pattern of body design which ". . . cannot conceivably serve a 'useful' purpose because they have no eyes." Can it be that the writer is overlooking that most rudimentary of evolutionary principles, that display is not the only aspect of visual body pattern with survival value, but that protection from larger, predatory animals is another? In the latter case, the sea snails' eyesight is irrelevant.

It will take better evidence than this to convince us "hard-headed evolutionists."

EDITH R. SILVERMAN
Newton Center, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With all due respect to Adolf Portmann, and Marjorie Grene's estimation of his work, I fail to see what is "new" in his thesis.

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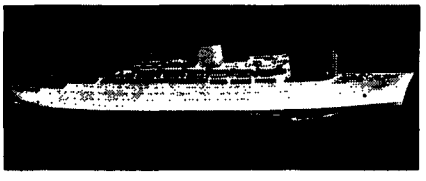

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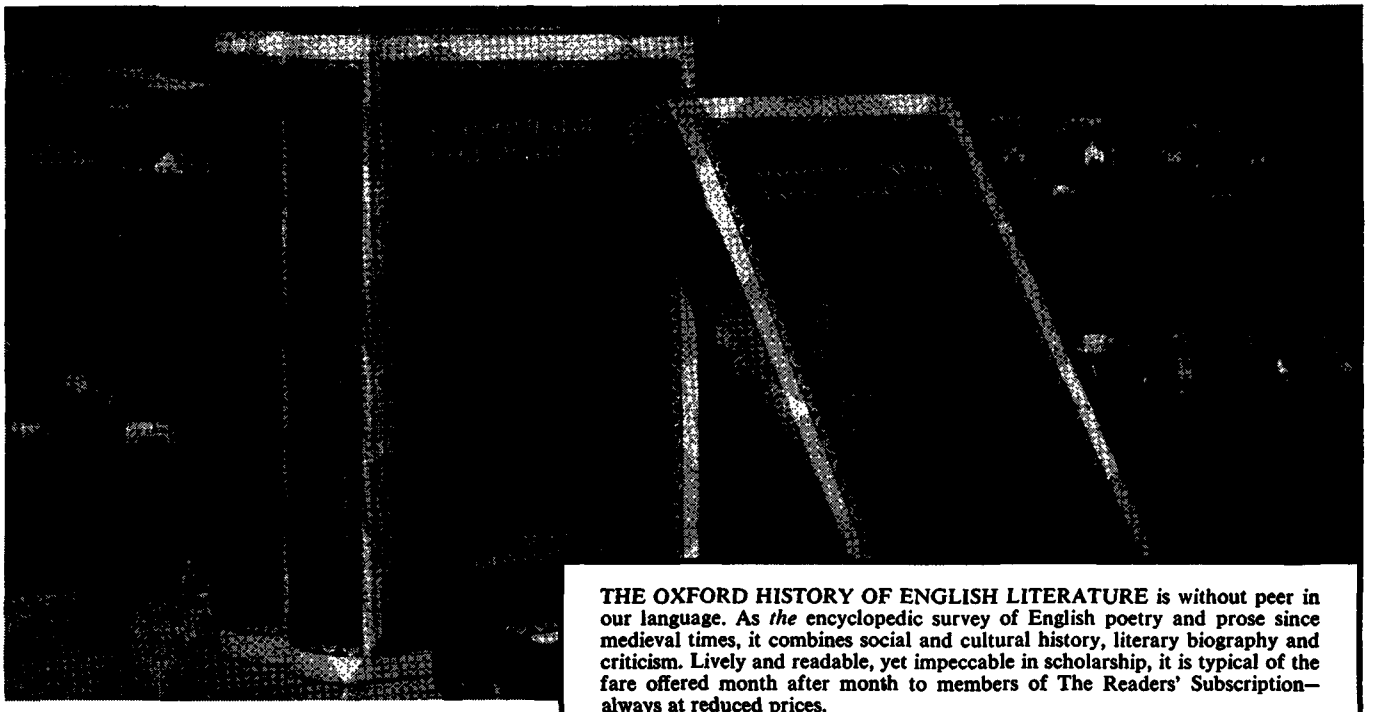

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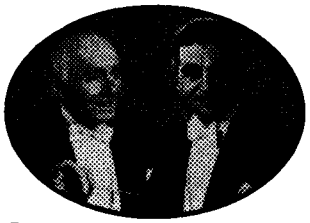

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It may be true that most biologists are still wedded to the view enunciated by Darwin over 100 years ago, namely, that "there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties" and that "the mental powers of higher animals do not differ in kind, though greatly in degree, from corresponding powers of man." However, sociologists and anthropologists and social psychologists, particularly of the Symbolic-Interactionist school, have for some time questioned Darwin's view and have gathered a significant body of data to support the exactly opposite view, *viz.*, that man is fundamentally different from all other animals, including his closest zoological relatives, and that this difference may be summed up in man's capacity to create, manipulate, and transmit abstract symbols. This capacity, in turn, is the basis of culture and language.

This view, although explicitly developed by contemporary anthropologists like Leslie Whyte, A. L. Kroeber, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Clyde Kluckhohn, was already advanced in Darwin's time—albeit in a more rudimentary form—by Sir Edward Tylor.

Portmann's ideas, then, while very important indeed, may by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as novel. And the fact that these ideas had to be painfully discovered anew, shows just how poor is the communication between practitioners of the biological sciences on the one hand, and practitioners of the social sciences on the other.

IRVING M. ZEITLIN
Department of Sociology
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Marjorie Grene states "the concept of centricity may have far-reaching consequences for our thinking about nature, science, and ourselves." Adolf Portmann's article concludes with an allusion to the mystery of the origin of man. These statements appear related to the currently established Darwinian viewpoint which is helping destroy man's faith in himself as a morally responsible and valuable person. Since man is not created for a purpose, but developed accidentally to no purpose, his moral ideas represent only the need for survival of an organism with a central nervous system built to invent useful stratagems.

Today, as never before, our fundamental ideas are seen to originate in a biological system, the brain. Yesterday, it was said that ontology recapitulates phylogeny. Today, in a sense, philosophy recapitulates biology. It is unfortunate that these ideas require a basic grasp of modern biology in order for them to be properly evaluated.

Certainly, readers of COMMENTARY are among those concerned with keeping alive the most humane of our traditional values. And the threats to these are both clear and present. But does a moral commitment demand an exhaustive effort to master the intricate mechanics of life? Isn't there some easier method of deriving from the "science" of life those lessons that can teach man a philosophy that is compatible with his noblest traditions? . . .

(Dr.) HAROLD KORETZ
Avoca, New York

MRS. GRENE writes:

Like Mr. Flint, I regret the heavy existentialist overtones of "authentic" and "inauthentic,"—though I confess it didn't occur to me that they would outweigh the soberer biological connotations of Portmann's usage. "The adjectives actually used by Portmann are in fact, *eigentlich* and *uneigentlich*, literally *authentic* and *inauthentic*. "Direct" and "indirect" are neither Portmann's terms, nor, in my opinion, do they render his meaning. He means, if I understand him, that what he calls *"eigentliche Erscheinungen"* are just that—genuinely appearing. The others are *not* "indirect," but simply, *qua* appearances, *not* genuine: inauthentic.

Nor did I mean to read Portmann's work as primarily "an assault on mechanism." If my article has given that impression, this may arise partly from the cutting that was necessary to condense a lengthy chapter into article form. Within its fuller context, however, my emphasis on the non-Galilean tenor of Portmann's thought is, I submit, fair, and important. The conceptual reform that is needed in order to assimilate all aspects of biology —and social science—to an adequate model of scientific knowledge is by no means completed. One still needs, therefore, to contrast Portmann's ideas with those of more orthodox biologists and philoso-

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phers. If Mr. Flint doubts this, let him consult, for example, Morton Beckner's *Biological Way of Thought* (Columbia, 1962), or any of Ernest Nagel's articles on the philosophy of biology.

Now as to Professor Zeitlin's point: man, though a *cultural* animal, is still an animal, and to see, as Portmann does, his uniqueness as rooted in his *biological* uniqueness, is both significant and novel. Nor can the social sciences be given adequate philosophical foundation except through the mediation of a sound philosophical biology.

About the sea snails: this is Portmann's example, and I presume that what he means is, not that there need necessarily be *no* function in the fact of color, but that—as in the case of the peacock's fan—the particularity and rich abundance of colored pattern cannot easily be conceived as primarily or purely functional. I know that functionally minded biologists *can*, by some detour or other, read any character as "useful"; Portmann's point is that we have here a vast array of visual data which are simply *there*. A biologist unfettered by Darwinian dogma can study them in, and for, their intrinsic value.

Texts & Translations

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to make a minor correction in Milton Himmelfarb's outstandingly fine article, "On Reading Matthew" [Oct. 1965]. The Revised Standard Version is not inconsistent in translating *parthenos* as "virgin" in Matthew 1:23 and as "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14. After all, the context of the quotation in Matthew is the story of the Virgin Birth. Thus it is clear that Matthew himself took Isaiah's *'almah-parthenos* to mean "virgin." RSV accurately indicates both Isaiah's original meaning and Matthew's misinterpretation of Isaiah. (I agree that RSV should not even footnote Isaiah's "young woman" as "or virgin.") The same reasoning holds true for Matthew's quotation in 22:44 from Psalm 110:1 ("my Lord" instead of "my lord"); RSV is simply reproducing Matthew's own misinterpretation of the Old Testament text.

In respect to his discussion of Matthew 15:10-20, Mr. Himmelfarb should read the parallel passage in Mark 7:14-23, which is probably the older version (though not necessarily the one closer to Jesus' actual words). The reasoning is simpler: it leaves the mouth out of the argument, and it draws the expected conclusion of abrogating the food laws. This is the line of thought followed by Christian commentators. By stressing the mouth and its evil thoughts (speech) in the Matthean version, Mr. Himmelfarb has presented a quite novel, and much more "Jewish," line of thought about what Jesus may actually have said and meant. Unfortunately, I know of no way to decide which view is more likely to be correct. . . .

(Rev.) Peter Francis
Brotherhood of the Love of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

On first looking into Himmelfarb's "Matthew" I wondered whether Mr. Himmelfarb would have employed the same matter-of-fact exegesis with the Pentateuch. He begins his article with a legitimate question: is there such a thing as a Judaeo-Christian tradition? "*Ad fontes,*" he then cries, and rushes into an exegesis of Matthew which, to say the least, doesn't seem to pertain to the original question in the first place.

. . . Mr. Himmelfarb dissects Matthew in a manner so casual and smug as to constitute effrontery. The usual accusations are there: deliberate tendentiousness and interpolation, not entirely honest translations, *parthenos* vs. *'almah,* etc. But Mr. Himmelfarb introduces a new element as well: one almost gets the impression from his interpretation that Matthew, crafty man that he was, was more responsible for Christianity than was Christ. And in yet another area, Mr. Himmelfarb argues that the Holy Spirit must have been a Gentile. After that, I really did need a shot of Grant's! . . .

Despite his good intentions I think that there is a monstrous flaw in Mr. Himmelfarb's "Matthew."

(Rev.) Berard Guinnessey, S.A.
Atonement Seminary
Franciscan Friars of the Atonement
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Though I agree with Mr. Himmelfarb that the RSV's rendering of Isaiah 7:14 shows that scholarship was divided on the translation of the word, *ha'-almah,* I would like to refer him to an article by Cyrus Gordon, formerly . . . of Dropsie College, in the *Journal of Bible and Religion* for April 1953,

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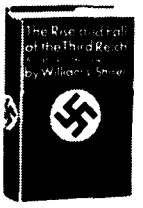

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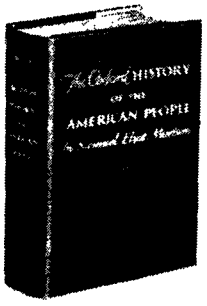

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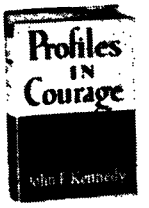

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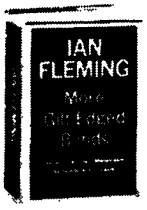

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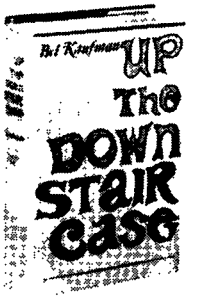

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in which he draws a parallel from the Ugaritic to support the use of the term "virgin," as a translation for the Hebrew, *ha'almah*. Gordon further emphasizes that this rendering is Jewish, and not Christian.

However *parthenos* may have been used in Hellenistic Greek, in New Testament usage it meant "virgin." This includes Matthew 25:1, 8 and . . . I Corinthians 7. According to Arndt and Gingrich, it is so used by Polycarp once and by the Shepherd of Hermos about ten times. . . . Professor Edward Young of Westminster Theological Seminary of Philadelphia further corroborates the point in his *Studies in Isaiah*. . . .

Again, Mr. Himmelfarb's statement that the supernatural birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit "must be Gentile" is contradicted by Dr. Gordon's statement that the virgin birth is a "Jewish interpretation." Also Matthew 22:41-46 does not contradict the Davidic descent of Jesus (Jeshua), but the passage is used to show the deity of the Messiah.

. . . Mr. Himmelfarb's article is nonetheless commendable in calling our attention to a matter of great importance. If Judaism and Christianity stem from a common source, why the chasm between them today? I believe the term Judaeo-Christian is a proper one. If Christianity was influenced away from the source by pagan influences, it is equally true that rabbinic rationalism has gone far to reducing Judaism to what it never was in the Old Testament, an abstract monotheism, and an ethical philosophy equated with humanism and socialistic reform.

CLARKE BURKHALTER
Memphis Baptist College
Memphis, Tennessee

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It seems to me that the gospel of Matthew can only have come from a Gentile living in the vicinity of Alexandria, and that John, Mark, and Luke must also have been Gentiles. Christianity, then, as Livneh writes, is a manifestation of the religious currents in late Hellenism . . . consisting of the religious relics of the Jewish messianist-baptist liberation movement that was destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 C. E. Christianity is a takeover bid by estranged Jews like Paul . . . who propagated pagan mysticisms and by actual pagans who used and misused Jewish sources. . . . Pagan and Jewish elements in Christianity have made an uneasy marriage, and hence the expression, "Judaeo-Christian" is nothing less than a contradiction in terms. . . .

S. LEVIN
Johannesburg, South Africa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

May I say how much I enjoyed Mr. Himmelfarb's article on reading Matthew? I would like to differ from him, however, when he charges the translators of the RSV with intellectual dishonesty, because they render *he parthenos* as "virgin," and not as "young woman." Out of context, as Mr. Himmelfarb admits, both *he parthenos and 'almah* may mean either "virgin" or "young woman." The only question, then, is what (or which) Matthew and his source, Isaiah, meant. It seems pretty clear that Isaiah meant "young woman" in the passage to which Matthew refers; but Matthew seems to have seized on the latent equivocation in Isaiah in order to forward his own Christian purposes. When, in short, the angel says to Joseph, "Do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit," the angel obviously is trying to quiet Joseph's fears about Mary's *virginity*. Who would quarrel with an angel? Only a textual critic. But I see no grounds for charging the RSV with dishonesty in their rendering of Matthew; and as for their marginal note to Isaiah, alternatively glossing *'almah* as "virgin," I think Mr. Himmelfarb's indignation is misplaced. The gloss is not necessarily "disgraceful" if it explains to the non-Hebraist why Matthew was able to reinterpret the word for purposes of Christian polemic. That Matthew "wilfully" misread Isaiah is quite arguable, but I think Mr. Himmelfarb shows little sympathy for the problems of Matthew's translators, Jewish or Christian.

Finally, I suppose that any translator of a sacred book owes something to his own dogmatic bias—that is what all the fuss is about, not the sciences of history and grammar, as Mr. Himmelfarb would have us believe. Here I would protest only the ultimate unfairness of charging an avowedly Christian translation . . . with failing in its duty toward Jews. In the dialogue between Jew and Christian, after all, what real stumbling-block does all this pother about "young woman" *vs.* "virgin" constitute? Both sides know each other's position;

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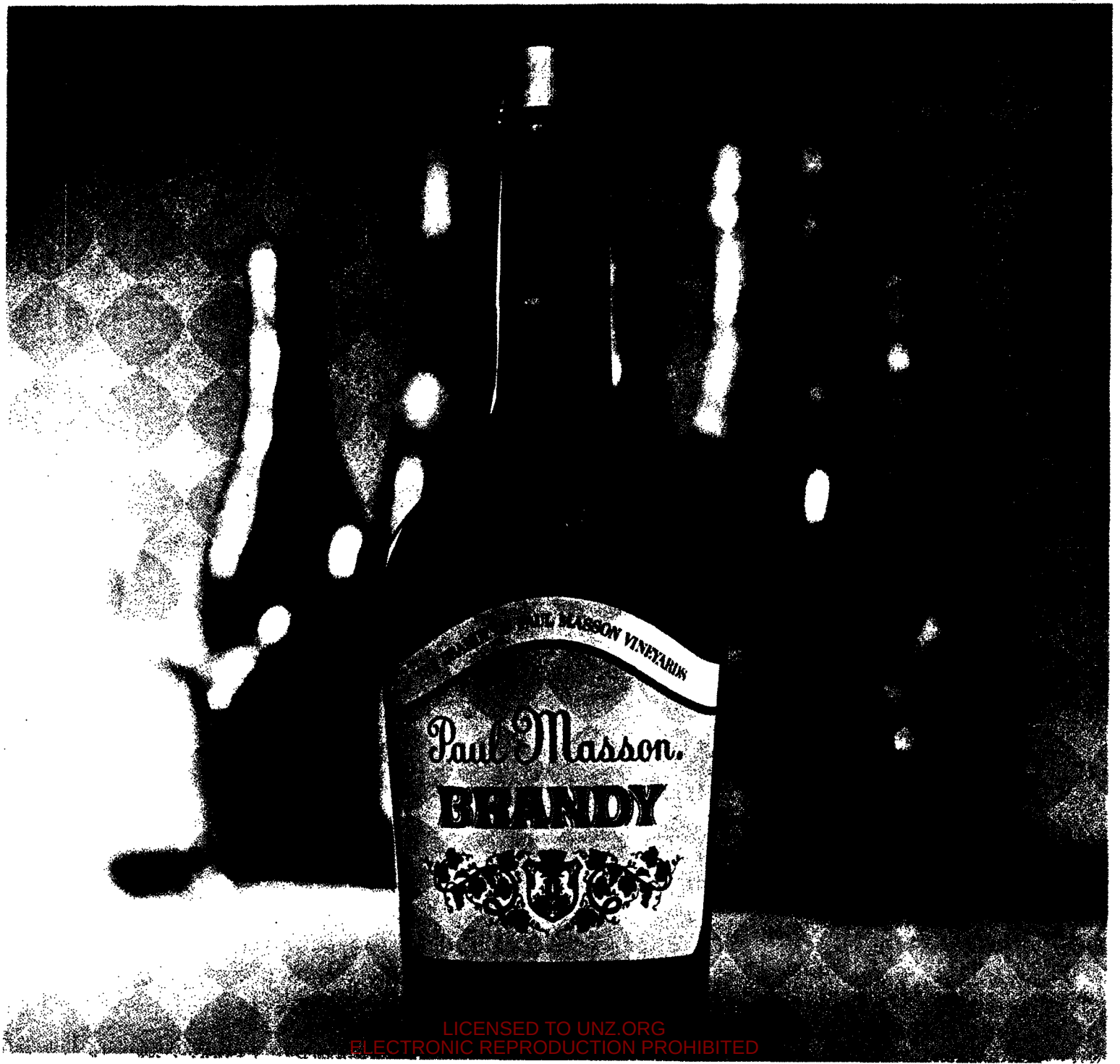

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the (mis)translations deceive only schoolchildren (and schoolchildren who read marginalia at that); and even—if I dare suggest it—if both sides reached a concordat on the matter, I really do not believe they would be much closer together. In such a situation, then, where compromise will not forward the dialogue, why should a Christian translator be blamed for reflecting his Christian beliefs (which, incidentally, Matthew shares) with his Christian readers? A note of regret is understandable, but shrill cries of "dishonesty" and "disgrace" have the hollow ring of a seminarian exercise.

HUGH AMORY
Department of English
Columbia University

Thought & Action (cont'd.)

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Just how much I shall miss Hans J. Morgenthau's lucid political analysis became painfully clear to me while reading Mr. Henry Fairlie's recent contribution ["Johnson and the Intellectuals," October 1965]. Mr. Fairlie seems to have known some British politicians very intimately, but can he ever have known any intellectuals? To say, as he does, that intellectuals hesitate to make definite and unqualified statements within their specialized fields is absurd. What about such recent controversies as those involving the Dead Sea Scrolls, the origins of the Second World War, the age of the universe . . . ? A scholar, like a politician, must frequently make up his mind without all the evidence he would like to have—which hardly absolves either one of them from the obligation of basing his decision on the best available evidence. But Mr. Fairlie demurs. "Power is safe," he tells us, "only if it is exercised . . . without claim to reason." If, as this suggests, power should be exercised *without reason*, we might as well go back to divination by the flight of birds. . . .

The critical point is this: without a fundamental respect for the truth, the political leaders of a powerful country like the U.S. may all too easily delude themselves as to the motives and consequences of their policies. This is the point which Professor Morgenthau has been reiterating in his recent writings on Vietnam. On the occasion of the CBS teach-in last June, to which Mr. Fairlie refers, McGeorge Bundy "annihilated" Professor Morgenthau only by employing that crudest of all debating tricks—simply giving the lie, *with no supporting evidence*, to every one of Professor Morgenthau's assertions; these included the assertion that the desertion rate in the South Vietnamese army was growing—a fact Professor Morgenthau had learned that very day from an unimpeachable government source. . . . Apparently Mr. Fairlie not only approves of Mr. Bundy's debating style but thinks it is the only appropriate style for politicians. And on the subject of style, I might mention that few of the intellectuals I know object to Johnson's style or were taken in by Kennedy's. Many of us do object, however, to policies based on the mindless slogans of American cold warriors. In Vietnam, particularly, U.S. policy has been crippled by such intellectually impoverished substitutes for real political ideas as the domino theory, the defense of the free world, and counterinsurgency. (Whatever happened, by the way, to the strategic hamlet program?)

One final irony on the subject of Vietnam and the intellectuals should be noted. It was in fact a group of American professors who initially helped to maneuver the U.S. into an increasingly deep involvement in Vietnam. I refer to the Michigan State University group who acted as advisers to Diem during the years 1955-60, helping among other things to build up his notorious secret police apparatus. . . . To undo the tragic errors perpetrated in Vietnam by an unholy alliance of academics with military advisers and CIA agents, we now need some imaginative initiatives. . . . If intellectuals don't provide these initiatives, who will? Surely not the State Department, Department of Defense, CIA, or a thoroughly cowed Congress. An example of such an imaginative initiative in Vietnam is the Mekong Delta project designed to develop the land and water resources of a great river basin. President Johnson recognized the political significance of this project when he alluded to it in his Johns Hopkins speech (April 1965). I can only conclude that there are more relations between politics and intellectual pursuits than are dreamed of in Mr. Fairlie's philosophy.

ROBERT PALTER
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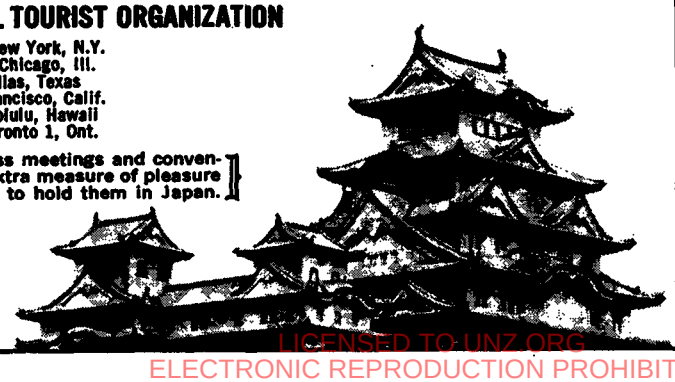

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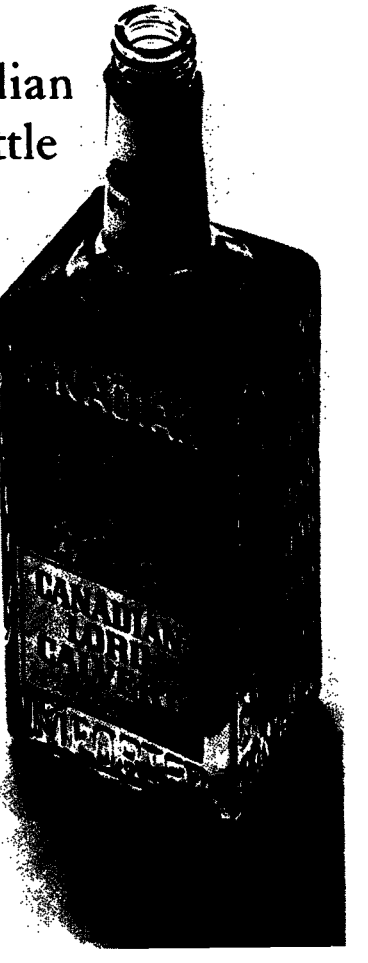

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The Hebrew Language

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Alter makes some amazing statements about modern Hebrew ["Poetry in Israel," December 1965]. How is one to treat, for instance, the sweeping generalization that the "Hebrew language everyone reads, writes, and speaks is to a great extent a translated language"? Suppose the word "English" replaced "Hebrew" in the same sentence, how could such a statement be refuted—by counting the number of words or phrases of foreign origin, by citing the number of borrowed clichés? Surely this is the case in colloquial and literary usage in every modern tongue. . . .

Further on, without any evidence . . . the severe judgment is passed that "Hebrew . . . at its worst . . . makes the tongue sound like an Esperanto imitation of the New York *Times*." Obviously Mr. Alter never tried his hand at rendering news stories or articles from the Hebrew press into English; he would be surprised at the difficulties involved if one wishes to remain faithful to the original. The reason is simple: while modern Hebrew is no longer purely Biblical, it maintains not only rich idiomatic texture in journalistic usage (even in popular tabloids like *Maariv* or *Yediot Aharonot*), but also, naturally, its Semitic structure. Thus it is harder to translate into English than, say, the German of *Der Spiegel*. This would not be the case were it an "imitation" of the New York *Times*.

Yet the verdict grows in severity: "it is easier to write a good philosophical essay, a sociological study, a piece of literary criticism in English and German than in Hebrew," declares Mr. Alter solemnly without adding: "provided one was brought up in English or German rather than in Hebrew." Obviously, Mr. Alter is unfamiliar with the tradition of sophisticated Hebrew philosophical writing from Maimonides, Ibn Gabirol, and Crescas onward. . . . Again, his assertion that "Hebrew . . . lacks some of the very linguistic tools that make precise analytical thinking possible" simply shows he does not know the language and its history well enough and is ignorant of the contemporary analytical work of philosophers like Rotenstreich, sociologists like Eisenstadt, critics like Sadan and historians like Talmon, as well as of the critical periodicals and the vast body of literature, . . . much of it analytical, in Hebrew.

After a continuous existence of 4,000 years, Hebrew needs no defenders—but your readers deserve better.

URI HURWITZ
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Let me congratulate you on having published Robert. Alter's admirable eassy on poetry in Israel.

There is one passage, however, which raises a question in my mind. Mr. Alter translates *takhshitei hakets* as "the jewels of apocalypse." Since he underlines the eschatological connotation of the word, *kets*, would not "the jewels of eschatology" be a preferable rendering? Far from blunting the point that the author is making, this translation would sharpen it.

Again, I am puzzled by his description of *hakhlili* (Genesis 49: 12) as "an enigmatic color-word" meaning "shining red." True, both the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version translate the phrase as "eyes red with wine." On the other hand, the Oxford Hebrew and English Lexicon of The Old Testament (1955), which, I believe, is regarded as highly authoritative, derives the word from a root represented in Arabic and Assyrian and translates it as "(dark) dull, from wine." Perhaps the most plausible equivalent is offered in The Anchor Bible Genesis (1964): "His eyes are darker than wine," the adjective, according to a note by the editor, being cognate with the Akkadian *ekelu*: "to be dark." Possibly Mr. Alter's version is due to the fact that the adjective has acquired the meaning of "shining red" in Israeli usage.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY
New York City

MR. ALTER writes:

My thanks to Mr. Yarmolinsky for his kind comment, though neither of his proposed translations would work: (1) Since the atmosphere of Amihai's poem is one of impending destruction, the kind of eschatology indicated by the context is clearly apocalyptic. (2) My point about *hakhlili* is precisely that its meaning has been in doubt and that the poet means to use its aura of mystification. I enclosed "shining red" in quotation marks to indicate that it was not a scientific translation of the Biblical word, merely a conjecture as to the color the poet might have had in mind.

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THE BEST thing I can say of Mr. Hurwitz's letter is that the kind of cultural chauvinism it reflects is, fortunately, a dying phenomenon in Israel. My judgment of Hebrew's limitations as a tool for analysis was clearly relative to other languages, not absolute. Does Mr. Hurwitz really think that the Hebrew of the Ibn Tibbons, Maimonides's translators, is evidence of a tradition of analytic usage equal to that of German, French, English? (Both Maimonides and Ibn Gabirol, by the way, wrote their philosophic work in Arabic, but I would hardly expect a reader of Mr. Hurwitz's ilk to bother with historical facts.) The Israeli academicians cited by Mr. Hurwitz illustrate my point aptly: though all have indeed written brilliantly in Hebrew, Talmon's and Eisenstadt's major work is in English, while Sadan, the most distinctive Hebrew stylist of the lot, has a notorious weakness for abandoning the labor of analysis to play associative word-games. And only Sadan, I think, would concur that it is as easy to write analytically in Hebrew as in the major Western languages. The progress made in adapting Hebrew to new realms of discourse has been extraordinary, but it is still impossible for a literary critic to refer precisely to, say, a "pattern of imagery" because there is no adequate Hebrew equivalent for the abstraction, "pattern," and no way of shifting from "images" to the abstract concept, "imagery."

As to linguistic distinctiveness, I would not deny that there are many broken strands of traditional idiom floating through the language of the daily press, but if Mr. Hurwitz has any knowledge of classical Hebrew (which is by no means 4,000 years old), he must be either disingenuous or terribly self-deluded to claim that Israeli journalese *at its worst* remains stylistically distinctive.

In the Courts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Winter's letter to COMMENTARY in which he asserts that a "Court of Gentiles" is mentioned in *Against Apion* II, 103-104, is indeed amazing ["Letters from Readers," January]. That source reads: . . .

> All who ever saw our temple are aware of the general design of the building, and the inviolable barriers which preserved its sanctity. It had four surrounding courts, each with its special statutory restrictions. The outer court was open to all, foreigners included; women during their impurity were alone refused admission. To the second court all Jews were admitted and, when uncontaminated by any defilement, their wives; to the third male Jews, if clean and purified; to the fourth the priests robed in their priestly vestments.

The term "Court of Gentiles" is non-existent and therefore Professor Solomon Zeitlin's statement of fact has not been disproved. . . .

The rabbinic source in *Kelim* 1.8 reads:

> There are ten degrees of holiness.
>
> The Land of Israel is holier than any other land. . . .
>
> The walled cities (of the Land of Israel) are still more holy, in that they must send forth the lepers from their midst. . . .
>
> Within the wall (of Jerusalem) is still more holy, for there (only) they may eat the Lesser Holy Things and the Second Tithe.
>
> The Temple Mount is still more holy, for no man or woman that has a flux, no menstruant, and no woman after childbirth may enter therein.
>
> The Rampart *(Hel)* is still more holy, for no gentiles and none that have contracted uncleanness from a corpse may enter therein.
>
> The *Court of the Women* is still more holy, for none that had immersed himself the selfsame day (because of uncleanness) may enter therein. . . .
>
> The *Court of the Israelites* is still more holy, for none whose atonement is yet incomplete may enter therein.
>
> The *Court of the Priests* is still more holy, for Israelites may not enter therein save only when they must perform the laying on of hands, slaughtering, and waving.
>
> Between the Porch and the Altar is still more holy for none that has a blemish may enter there.
>
> The Sanctuary is still more holy, for none may enter therein with hands and feet unwashed.
>
> The Holy of Holies is still more holy, for none may enter therein save only the High Priest on the Day of Atonement at the time of the (Temple) service.

We have specific references to the terms *ezrath nashim* (Court of Women), *ezrath Yisrael* (Court of Israel-

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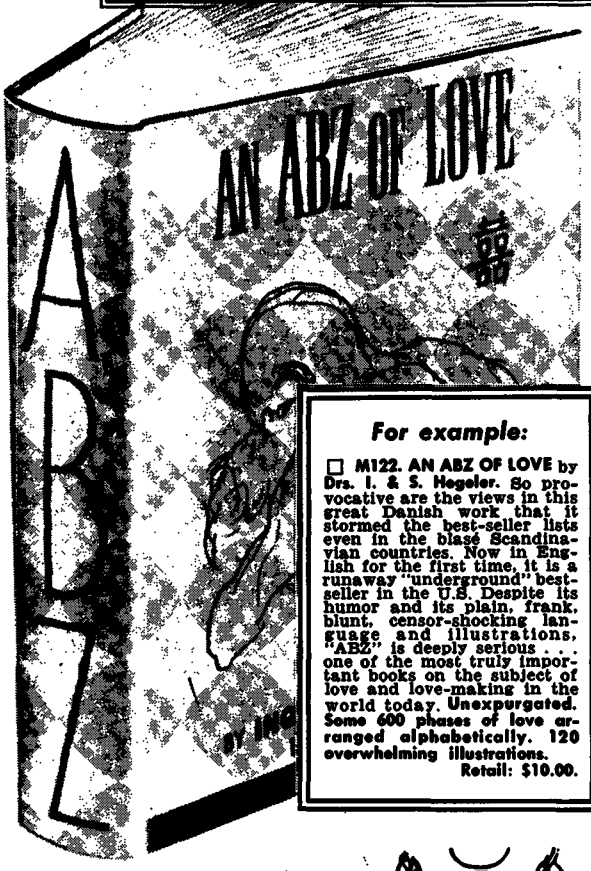

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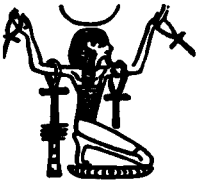

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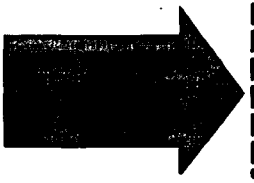

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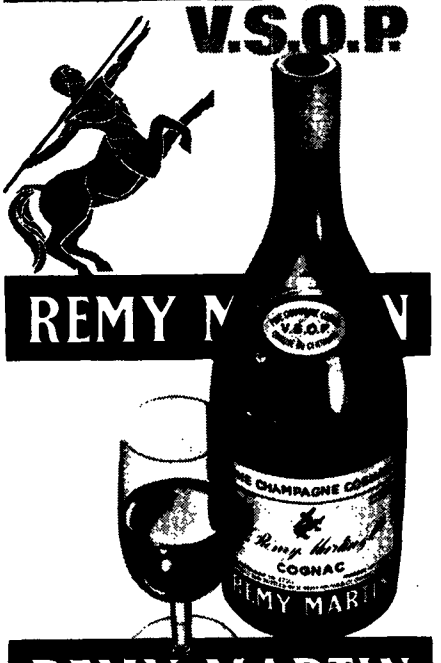

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ites) and *ezrath kohanim* (Court of Priests). But can Mr. Winter, with *his* scholarship, produce for us an *"ezrath goyyim"* (Court of Gentiles) anywhere? . . .

SIDNEY B. HOENIG
Yeshiva University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Winter argues against Professor Solomon Zeitlin's statement (*Jewish Quarterly Review,* July 1965) that there was no Court of Gentiles at the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem. Winter refers to Josephus, *Contra Apionem II,* 103-4, but the reference does not bear out his argument. It is true that Josephus speaks there as well as in his other works (*Wars* V, 192ff; *Antt.* XV, 417-8) of four courts at the Temple. However, he calls the first court the outer court, never the court of gentiles. The *Mishnah Middoth,* which is based on sources contemporaneous with Josephus, knows only of three courts: *ezrath nashim,* Court of Women; *ezrath Yisrael,* Court of Israel, and *ezrath kohanim,* Court of Priests. Thus there were three *azarot* at the Temple and not four. The Mishnah does not mention an *ezrat nokhrim, Court of Gentiles.* The outer court is called *har ha-bayith,* Hill of the Temple. (See *Mishnah Kelim* 1.8.) The description of the outer court in the works of Josephus corresponds to the description of *har ha-bayith* in the Mishnah. Josephus writes: "The outer court was open to all, foreigners included." The same is stated about *har ha-bayith, Kelim* 1.8.

JUDAH ROSENTHAL
College of Jewish Studies
Chicago, Illinois

MR. WINTER writes:

Zeitlin's lieutenants are quibbling. They admit the facts—and argue now about words. *At issue are the facts of the case.* Zeitlin asserted quite definitively: "There was no Court of Gentiles in the Temple Area"; he did not say that he saw something wrong in using the term "Court of Gentiles" instead of "Outer Court." Both Rosenthal and Hoenig admit the fact that there was on the Temple Mount such a *thing* as the Court of Gentiles, but object—on invalid grounds—to the use of this *term.*

The sanctuary in Jerusalem with its precincts stood on an elevation, the Temple Mount on *har ha-bayith.* There were four courts on the *har;* to three inner courts only Jews were admitted, while the outer court was open to non-Jews also—hence its name: Court of the Gentiles. The fact that there was an area on the Temple Mount to which Gentiles had access is hinted or referred to frequently in ancient writings (*e.g.* by Philo in *Legatio ad Caium* 212; by Josephus in *The Jewish War* II 341, V 194, VI 125, 126 and *Antiquities* XV 417), and is explicitly mentioned in Josephus's treaties *Against Apion* II 103, 104 in the following words:

> Our Temple . . . was surrounded by four courts . . . Admission to the outer (court) was free to all, including Gentiles (*allophuloi, alienigeni*); only women in the time of their menstruation were not allowed to enter. The second court could be entered by all Jews and their wives when free from any defilement; the third by male Jews if they were clean and purified; the fourth by priests robed in their sacerdotal vestments.

Mishnah Middoth is based on fairly old traditions. The compilers, however, were interested not so much in giving an exact topographical description of the Temple Mount as in preserving memories of the measurements of localities where Jews had worshipped before the Temple was destroyed. Hence they omitted mentioning the outer court, or "Court of Gentiles," which, though located on the Mount, was not the scene of Jewish acts of worship. Yet even *Middoth* makes it clear that there was on the Temple Hill a certain area to which Gentiles had access; it mentions a *soreg,* or *wall of partition,* that separated the respective courtyards.

THE lengthy enumeration of the degrees of holiness in Dr. Hoenig's letter is irrelevant to the issue with which he is concerned. Of relevance is just one single sentence in *Mishnah Kelim* 1.8 which indicates that Gentiles, though they had access to one part of the precincts of the sanctuary, were barred from entering others.

Modern authors (including Messrs. Zeitlin and Hoenig) freely use the expression *religio licita* with reference to a religious cult which was tolerated by the Roman government. They are at liberty to do so without asking whether the actual term *"religio licita"* occurs in Roman Law. It does not. Nonetheless, the use of this expression is

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justified by the consideration that it explains without tedious circumlocution a situation which in fact existed. It is the same in our case: for over a thousand years historians by common consent (of course, always exempting Professor Solomon Zeitlin) have been using the expression "Court of Gentiles" to designate *the court to which Gentiles were admitted.* The only unexceptionable statement in Zeitlin's note in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* is this:

> "Authors who have dealt with the period of the Second Temple state that there was a Court of Gentiles in the Temple area, and this view has been universally accepted."

Quite rightly so, as our evidence shows.

To oppose a terminology of centuries-long standing on the ground that the Talmud does not speak of an *ezrath goyyim* (court of nations) or an *ezrath nokhrim* (court of resident foreigners) is exhibitionism and not scholarship. We would know little of Jewish history from post-exilic times if we had only the Talmud as a source.

Therapy & Ethics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Farber's essay ["Psychoanalysis & Morality," Nov. '65] points up an important issue. . . . Although Freud attempted to disassociate himself from a consideration of the relationship of ethics to psychoanalysis, the passage of time has proven the necessity for recognizing the implications of the psychoanalytic system for moral conduct. . . . It is doubtful, however, that these issues will be objectively and truthfully confronted unless the therapist first clearly defines his responsibilities. He cannot evade the commitment . . . to a patient who, by his very coming to him is appealing for help in making decisions. To thrust the burden back upon the patient is a denial of professional responsibility. . . .

To resort, on the other hand, to the manipulation of behavior employed in the various conditioning techniques, as described by Dr. London, assigns the therapist . . . the role of an omniscient authority who, almost by definition, violates the integrity of his patient's personality. . . .

The answer seems to lie in a therapy that is carried out by well-

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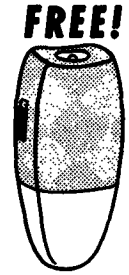

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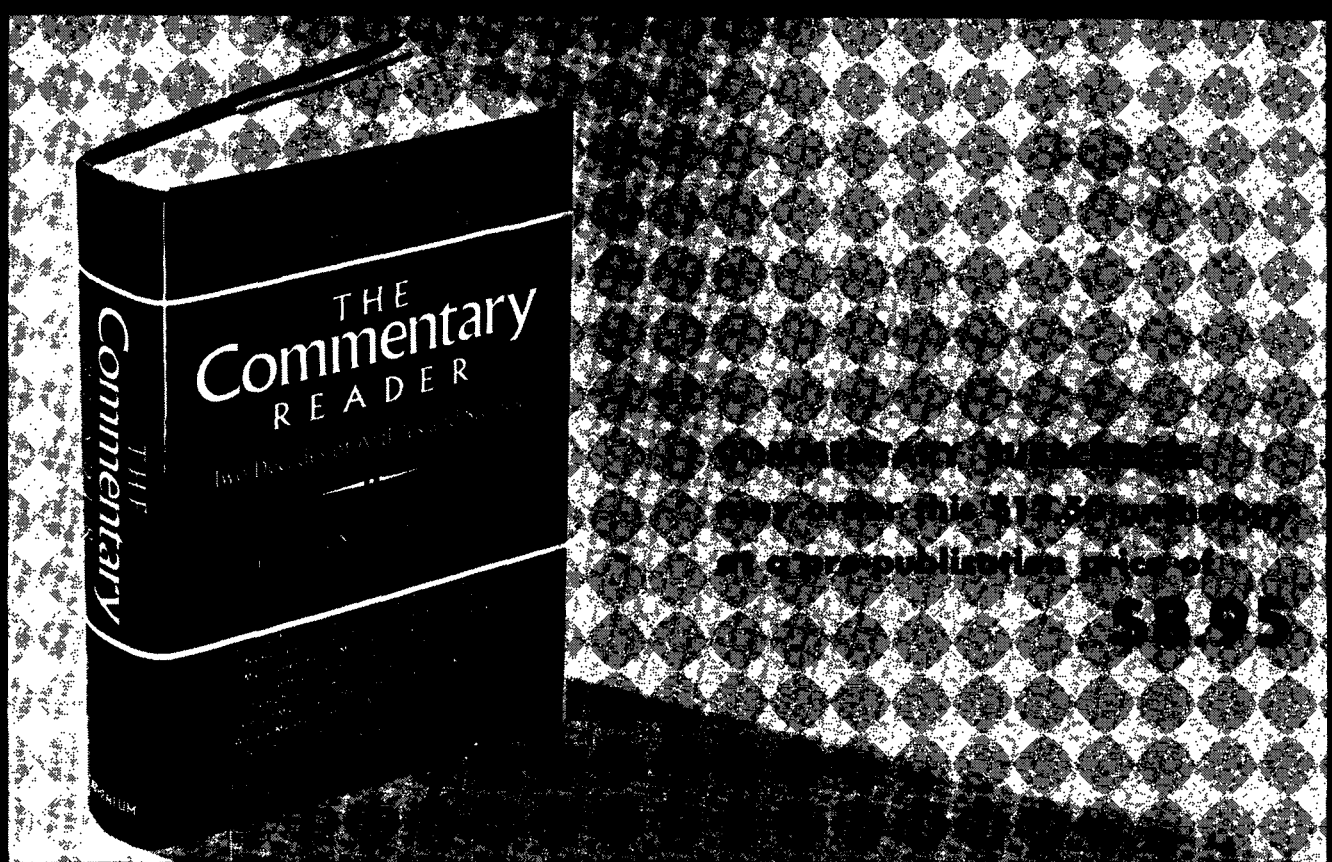

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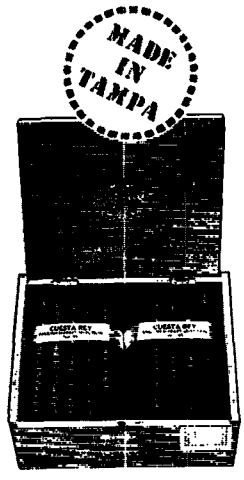

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DAVID SHAKOW
Kensington, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Dr. Farber did not mention one type of psychiatric worker of interest to the public—the industrial psychiatrist. . . .

If we grant that the psychiatrist's task is to help the patient adjust to his environment, the question becomes: how are we to tell when the patient is functioning better? . . . For the industrial psychiatrist who sees no moral content to his work . . . the answer is a simple one: when the patient is functioning more efficiently, channeling all his energies into efforts to please his superiors.

But the industrial psychiatrist who takes it upon himself to help determine the morality of various courses open to the bothered worker/patient assumes a heavy load indeed. The patient did not seek him out as a private practitioner. Moreover, he has ties to the same corporation as does the worker/patient, which makes it impossible for him to transfer the burden of moral choice to an impersonal market which will grant or deny what the patient seeks. . . .

There are extreme illustrations of the moral problems facing an industrial psychiatrist unwilling to transfer moral responsibility to a managerial bureaucracy: what about the industrial psychiatric diagnostician who recommends to a patient lengthy psychoanalysis as a means of dissolving suicidal impulses while adjusting to a distasteful work situation . . . when a change of job might actually be a quicker way out of the impasse? What about an industrial psychiatrist who uses the secretly-recorded results of polygraph examinations, for example, which some managements require. . . . And what if his diagnosis then determines whether the worker/patient will be given or denied the psychiatric sacrament—i.e., psychiatric concurrence in promotion, assignment overseas, the key to the executive washroom, etc? Dr. Szasz's old-fashioned regard for the patient's preferences in sitting up or lying down seem to have been left far behind by these advances in applied behavioral science. . . .

WINSTON ASCHAM BRENT
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . If Dr. Szasz's "autonomy" is as inhuman and perverse as Dr. Farber implies, we are all in grievous trouble. And of course we are, whether or not for the reasons either doctor assigns.

Articles like Dr. Farber's give us both the reminder and the hope that open and serious debate can rescue our thinking from desuetude . . . and parochialism.

(DR.) J. B. SMITH
Beverly Hills, California

[*Further correspondence on Mr. Farber's article will appear in our April issue.*]

A Dissent

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It has taken me all this time to get myself to comment on Meyer Liben's reply—in his "C.C.N.Y.—A Memoir" [September 1965]—to those who accused Morris Cohen of cruelty in the classroom, of humiliating a student and enjoying his discomfiture. "Perhaps," said Mr. Liben, "like Socrates, he took pleasure in exposing contradictions . . . but this was not basically a personal matter, so how could it be cruel? . . . I suppose he did not see every easy or thoughtless answer as reflecting a personality problem. . . ." I write as one who was lucky enough not to be humiliated myself by Cohen, but who for a couple of years (1919-21) watched him humiliate others. And these included some who in fact were not guilty of the contradictions, the easy or thoughtless answer, that Cohen, like Socrates, was obligated to deal with ruthlessly—but whom, like Cohen, he answered *as though they had been* guilty of those contradictions, that easy or thoughtless answer. I cannot give specific examples of this; but I do still remember every word of the following exchange in a Philosophy 1 class, which will give an idea of how Cohen operated:

Cohen (to the captain of the water-polo team): "Mr. Menkes, tell us about Epictetus."
Menkes: "Well, he believed—"
Cohen (interrupting): "You don't know what he believed. Sit down."

B. H. HAGGIN
New York City

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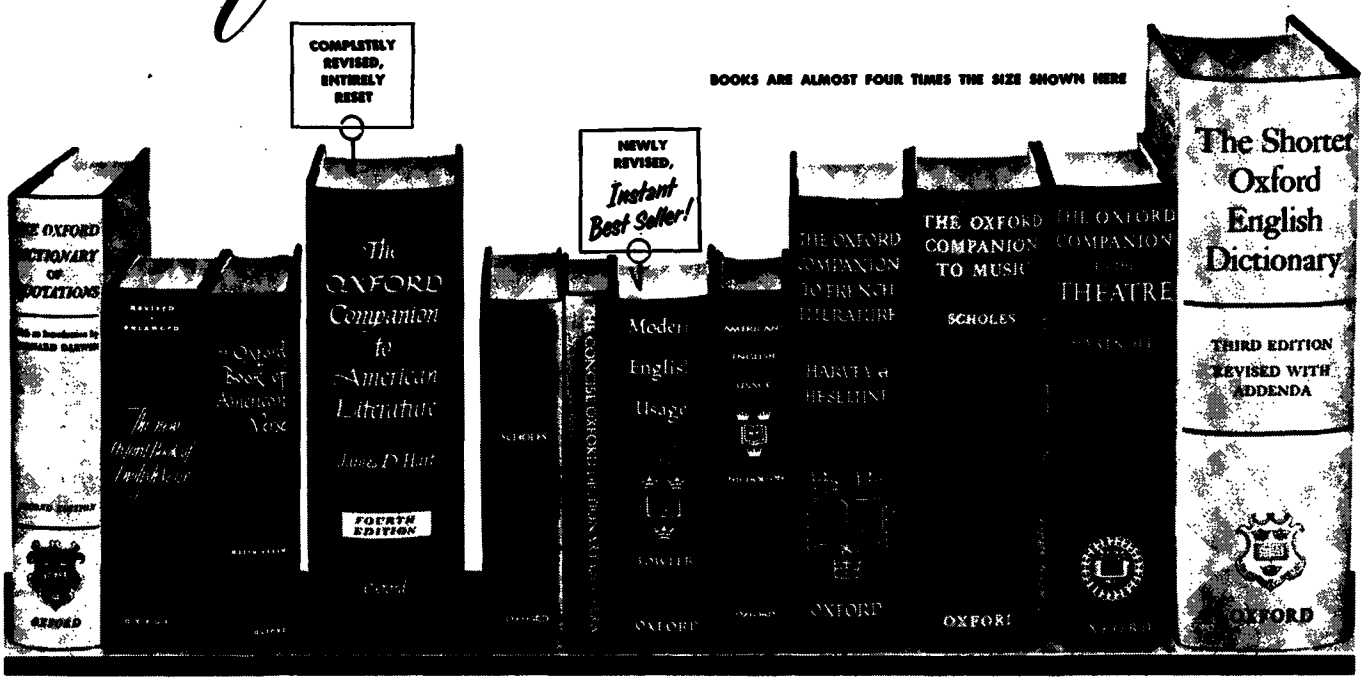
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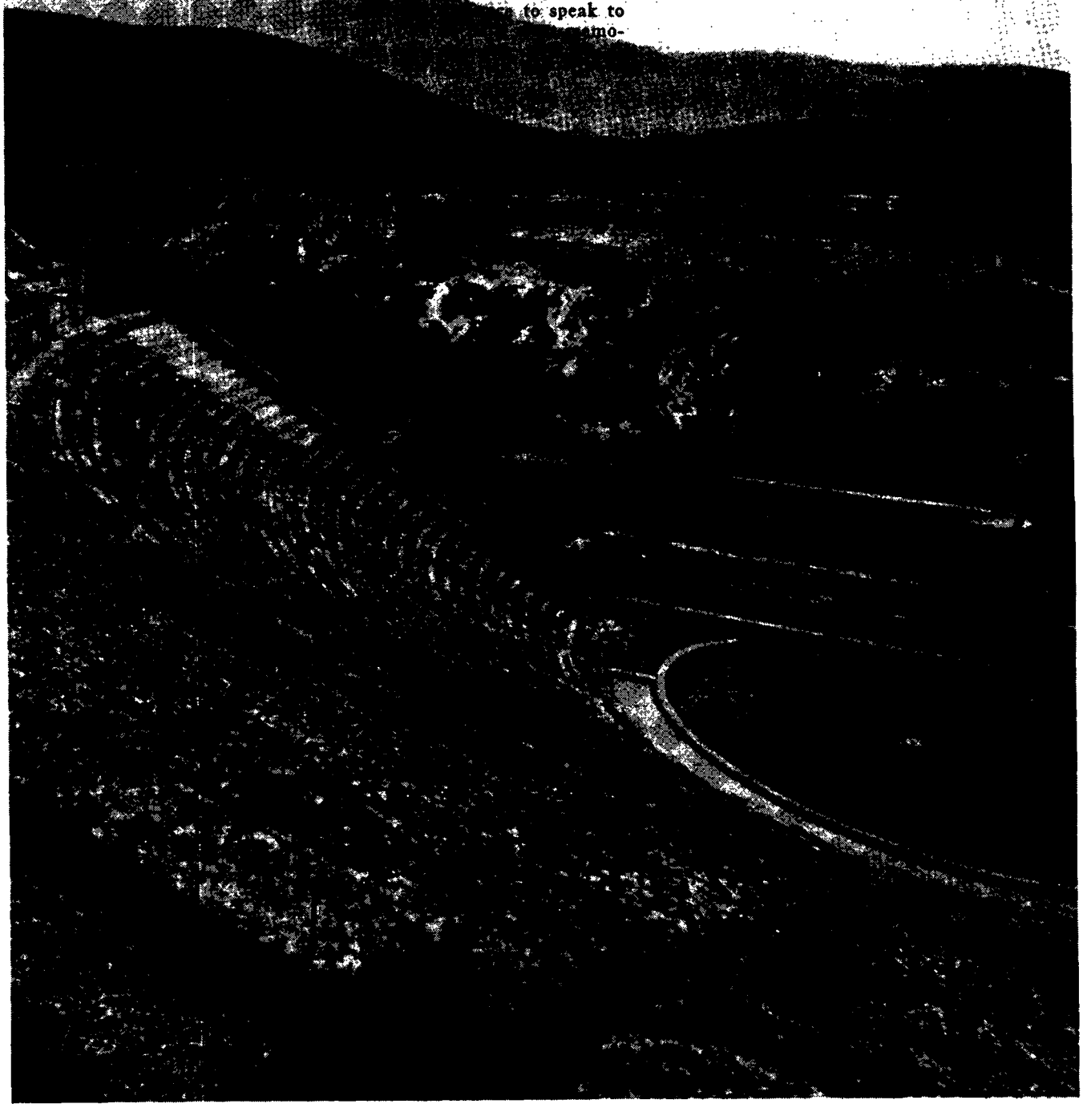

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THE WATTS "MANIFESTO" & THE McCONE REPORT

BAYARD RUSTIN

THE RIOTS IN the Watts section of Los Angeles last August continued for six days, during which 34 persons were killed, 1,032 were injured, and some 3,952 were arrested. Viewed by many of the rioters themselves as their "manifesto," the uprising of the Watts Negroes brought out in the open, as no other aspect of the Negro protest has done, the despair and hatred that continue to brew in the Northern ghettoes despite the civil-rights legislation of recent years and the advent of "the war on poverty." With national attention focused on Los Angeles, Governor Edward P. Brown created a commission of prominent local citizens, headed by John A. McCone, to investigate the causes of the riots and to prescribe remedies against any such outbreaks in the future. Just as the violent confrontation on the burning streets of Watts told us much about the underlying realities of race and class relations in America—summed up best, perhaps, by the words of Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker, "We're on top and they're on the bottom"—so does the McCone Report, published under the title *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?*, tell us much about the response of our political and economic institutions to the Watts "manifesto."

Like the much-discussed Moynihan Report, the McCone Report is a bold departure from the standard government paper on social problems. It goes beyond the mere recital of statistics to discuss, somewhat sympathetically, the real problems of the Watts community—problems like unemployment, inadequate schools, dilapidated housing—and it seems at first glance to be leading toward constructive programs. It never reaches them, however, for, again like the Moynihan Report, it is ambivalent about the basic reforms that are needed to solve these problems and therefore shies away from spelling them out too explicitly. Thus, while it calls for the creation of 50,000 new jobs to compensate for the "spiral of failure" that it finds among the Watts Negroes, the McCone Report does not tell us how these jobs are to be created or obtained and instead recommends existing programs which have already shown themselves to be inadequate. The Moynihan Report, similarly, by emphasizing the breakdown of the Negro family, also steers clear of confronting the thorny issues of Negro unemployment as such.

By appearing to provide new viewpoints and fresh initiatives while at the same time repeating, if in more sophisticated and compassionate terms, the standard white stereotypes and shibboleths about Negroes, the two reports have become controversial on both sides of the Negro question. On the one hand, civil-rights leaders can point to the recognition in these reports of the need for jobs and training, and for other economic and social programs to aid the Negro family, while conservatives can find confirmed in their pages the Negro penchant for violence, the excessive agitation against law and order by the civil-rights movement, or the high rates of crime and illegitimacy in the Negro community; on the other hand, both sides have criticized the reports for feeding ammunition to the opposition. Unfortunately, but inevitably, the emphasis on *Negro* behavior in both reports has stirred up an abstract debate over the interpretation of data rather than suggesting programs for dealing with the existing and very concrete situation in which American Negroes find themselves. For example, neither report is concerned about segregation and both tacitly assume that the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 are already destroying this system. In the case of the McCone Report, this leaves the writers free to discuss the problems of Negro housing, education, and unemployment in great detail without attacking the conditions of de facto segregation that underly them.

THE ERRORS and misconceptions of the McCone Report are particularly revealing because it purports to deal with the realities of the Watts riots rather than with the abstractions of the Negro family. The first distortion of these realities occurs in the opening chapter—"The Crisis: An Overview"—where, after briefly discussing the looting and beatings, the writers conclude that "The rioters seem to have been caught up in an insensate rage of destruction." Such an image may

BAYARD RUSTIN, the noted civil-rights leader, is executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute in New York. His article, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement," in the February 1965 COMMENTARY, has been widely discussed.

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reflect the fear of the white community that Watts had run amok during six days in August, but it does not accurately describe the major motive and mood of the riots, as subsequent data in the report itself indicate. While it is true that Negroes in the past have often turned the violence inflicted on them by society in upon themselves—"insensate rage" would perhaps have been an appropriate phrase for the third day of the 1964 Harlem riots—the whole point of the outbreak in Watts was that it marked the first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism and was carried on with the express purpose of asserting that they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.

This message came home to me over and over again when I talked with the young people in Watts during and after the riots, as it will have come home to those who watched the various television documentaries in which the Negroes of the community were permitted to speak for themselves. At a street-corner meeting in Watts when the riots were over, an unemployed youth of about twenty said to me, "We won." I asked him: "How have you won? Homes have been destroyed, Negroes are lying dead in the streets, the stores from which you buy food and clothes are destroyed, and people are bringing you relief." His reply was significant: "We won because we made the whole world pay attention to us. The police chief never came here before; the mayor always stayed uptown. We made them come." Clearly it was no accident that the riots proceeded along an almost direct path to City Hall.

Nor was the violence along the way random and "insensate." Wherever a store-owner identified himself as a "poor working Negro trying to make a business" or as a "Blood Brother," the mob passed the store by. It even spared a few white businesses that allowed credit or time purchases, and it made a point of looting and destroying stores that were notorious for their high prices and hostile manners. The McCone Report itself observes that "the rioters concentrated on food markets, liquor stores, clothing stores, department stores, and pawn shops." The authors "note with interest that no residences were deliberately burned, that damage to schools, libraries, public buildings was minimal and that certain types of business establishments, notably service stations and automobile dealers, were for the most part unharmed." It is also worth noting that the rioters were much more inclined to destroy the stock of the liquor stores they broke into than to steal it, and that according to the McCone Report, "there is no evidence that the rioters made any attempt to steal narcotics from pharmacies . . . which were looted and burned."

This is hardly a description of a Negro community that has run amok. The largest number of arrests were for looting—not for arson or shooting. Most of the people involved were not habitual thieves; they were members of a deprived group who seized a chance to possess things that all the dinning affluence of Los Angeles had never given them. There were innumerable touching examples of this behavior. One married couple in their sixties was seen carrying a couch to their home, and when its weight became too much for them, they sat down and rested on it until they could pick it up again. Langston Hughes tells of another woman who was dragging a sofa through the streets and who stopped at each intersection and waited for the traffic light to turn green. A third woman went out with her children to get a kitchen set, and after bringing it home, she discovered they needed one more chair in order to feed the whole family together; they went back to get the chair and all of them were arrested.

If the McCone Report misses the point of the Watts riots, it shows even less understanding of their causes. To place these in perspective, the authors begin by reviewing the various outbursts in the Negro ghettoes since the summer of 1964 and quickly come up with the following explanations: "Not enough jobs to go around, and within this scarcity not enough by a wide margin of a character which the untrained Negro could fill. . . . Not enough schooling to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged Negro child whose environment from infancy onward places him under a serious handicap." Finally, "a resentment, even hatred, of the police as a symbol of authority."

For the members of the special commission these are the fundamental causes of the current Negro plight and protest, which are glibly summed up in the ensuing paragraph by the statement that "Many Negroes moved to the city in the last generation and are totally unprepared to meet the conditions of city life." I shall be discussing these "causes" in detail as we go along, but it should be noted here that the burden of responsibility has already been placed on these hapless migrants to the cities. There is not one word about the conditions, economic as well as social, that have pushed Negroes out of the rural areas; nor is there one word about whether the cities have been willing and able to meet the demand for jobs, adequate housing, proper schools. After all, one could as well say that it is the *cities* which have been "totally unprepared" to meet the "conditions of *Negro* life," but the moralistic bias of the McCone Report, involving as it does an emphasis on the decisions of men rather than the pressure of social forces, continually operates in the other direction.

The same failure of awareness is evident in the report's description of the Los Angeles situation (the Negro areas of Los Angeles "are not urban gems, neither are they slums," the Negro population "has exploded," etc.). The authors do concede that the Los Angeles transportation system is the "least adequate of any major city," but even here they fail to draw the full consequences of their

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findings. Good, cheap transportation is essential to a segregated working-class population in a big city. In Los Angeles a domestic worker, for example, must spend about $1.50 and 1½ to 2 hours to get to a job that pays $6 or $7 a day. This both discourages efforts to find work and exacerbates the feeling of isolation.

A neighborhood such as Watts may seem beautiful when compared to much of Harlem (which, in turn, is an improvement over the Negro section of Mobile, Alabama)—but it is still a ghetto. The housing is run-down, public services are inferior, the listless penned-in atmosphere of segregation is oppressive. Absentee landlords are the rule, and most of the businesses are owned by whites: neglect and exploitation reign by day, and at night, as one Watts Negro tersely put it, "There's just the cops and us."

The McCone Report, significantly, also ignores the political atmosphere of Los Angeles. It refers, for example, to the repeal in 1964 of the Rumford Act—the California fair-housing law—in these words: "In addition, many Negroes here felt and were encouraged to feel that they had been affronted by the passage of Proposition 14." Affronted, indeed! The largest state in the Union, by a three-to-one majority, abolishes one of its own laws against discrimination and Negroes are described as regarding this as they might the failure of a friend to keep an engagement. What they did feel—and without any need of encouragement—was that while the rest of the North was passing civil-rights laws and improving opportunities for Negroes, their own state and city were rushing to reinforce the barriers against them.

The McCone Report goes on to mention two other "aggravating events in the twelve months prior to the riot." One was the failure of the poverty program to "live up to [its] press notices," combined with reports of "controversy and bickering" in Los Angeles over administering the program. The second "aggravating event" is summed up by the report in these words:

> Throughout the nation unpunished violence and disobedience to law were widely reported, and almost daily there were exhortations here and elsewhere, to take the most extreme and illegal remedies to right a wide variety of wrongs, real and supposed.

It would be hard to frame a more insidiously equivocal statement of the Negro grievance concerning law enforcement during a period that included the release of the suspects in the murder of the three civil-rights workers in Mississippi, the failure to obtain convictions against the suspected murderers of Medgar Evers and Mrs. Violet Liuzzo, the Gilligan incident in New York, the murder of Reverend James Reeb, and the police violence in Selma, Alabama—to mention only a few of the more notorious cases. And surely it would have been more to the point to mention that throughout the nation Negro demonstrations have almost invariably been non-violent, and that the major influence on the Negro community of the civil-rights movement has been the strategy of discipline and dignity. Obsessed by the few prophets of violent resistance, the McCone Commission ignores the fact that never before has an American group sent so many people to jail or been so severely punished for trying to uphold the law of the land.

IT IS NOT stretching things too far to find a connection between these matters and the treatment of the controversy concerning the role of the Los Angeles police. The report goes into this question at great length, finally giving no credence to the charge that the police may have contributed to the spread of the riots through the use of excessive force. Yet this conclusion is arrived at not from the point of view of the Watts Negroes, but from that of the city officials and the police. Thus, the report informs us, in judicial hearings that were held on 32 of the 35 deaths which occurred, 26 were ruled justifiable homicides, but the report —which includes such details as the precise time Mayor Yorty called Police Chief Parker and when exactly the National Guard was summoned—never tells us what a "justifiable homicide" is considered to be. It tells us that "of the 35 killed, one was a fireman, one was a deputy sheriff, and one was a Long Beach policeman," but it does not tell us how many Negroes were killed or injured by police or National Guardsmen. (Harry Fleischman of the American Jewish Committee reports that the fireman was killed by a falling wall; the deputy sheriff, by another sheriff's bullet; and the policeman, by another policeman's bullet.) We learn that of the 1,032 people reported injured, 90 were police officers, 36 were firemen, 10 were National Guardsman, 23 were from government agencies. To find out that about 85 per cent of the injured were Negroes, we have to do our own arithmetic. The report contains no information as to how many of these were victims of police force, but one can surmise from the general pattern of the riots that few could have been victims of Negro violence.

The report gives credence to Chief Parker's assertion that the rioters were the "criminal element in Watts" yet informs us that of the 3,438 adults arrested, 1,164 had only minor criminal records and 1,232 had never been arrested before. Moreover, such statistics are always misleading. Most Negroes, at one time or another, have been picked up and placed in jail. I myself have been arrested twice in Harlem on charges that had no basis in fact: once for trying to stop a police officer from

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arresting the wrong man; the second time for asking an officer who was throwing several young men into a paddy wagon what they had done. Both times I was charged with interfering with an arrest and kept overnight in jail until the judge recognized me and dismissed the charges. Most Negroes are not fortunate enough to be recognized by judges.

Having accepted Chief Parker's view of the riots, the report goes on to absolve him of the charge of discrimination: "Chief Parker's statements to us and collateral evidence, such as his fairness to Negro officers, are inconsistent with his having such an attitude ['deep hatred of Negroes']. Despite the depth of feeling against Chief Parker expressed to us by so many witnesses, he is recognized even by many of his vocal critics as a capable Chief who directs an efficient police force and serves well this entire community."

I am not going to stress the usual argument that the police habitually mistreat Negroes. Every Negro knows this. There is scarcely any black man, woman, or child in the land who at some point or other has not been mistreated by a policeman. (A young man in Watts said, "The riots will continue because I, as a Negro, am immediately considered to be a criminal by the police and, if I have a pretty woman with me, she is a tramp even if she is my wife or mother.") Police Chief Parker, however, goes beyond the usual bounds. He does not recognize that he is prejudiced, and being both naïve and zealous about law and order, he is given to a dangerous fanaticism. His reference to the Negro rioters as "monkeys," and his "top . . . and bottom" description of the riots, speak for themselves, and they could only have further enraged and encouraged the rioters. His insistence on dealing with the outbreak in Watts as though it were the random work of a "criminal element" threatened to lead the community, as Martin Luther King remarked after the meeting he and I had with Chief Parker, "into potential holocaust." Though Dr. King and I have had considerable experience in talking with public officials who do not understand the Negro community, our discussions with Chief Parker and Mayor Samuel Yorty left us completely nonplussed. They both denied, for example, that there was any prejudice in Los Angeles. When we pointed to the very heavy vote in the city for Proposition 14, they replied, "That's no indication of prejudice. That's personal choice." When I asked Chief Parker about his choice of language, he implied that this was the only language Negroes understood.

The impression of "blind intransigence and ignorance of the social forces involved" which Dr. King carried away from our meeting with Chief Parker is borne out by other indications. The cast of his political beliefs, for example, was evidenced during his appearance last May on the Manion Forum, one of the leading platforms of the radical right, in which (according to newspaper reports) he offered his "considered opinion that America today is in reality more than half pagan" and that "we have moved our form of government to a socialist form of government." Such opinions have a good deal of currency today within the Los Angeles police department. About a month before the riots, a leaflet describing Dr. King as a liar and a Communist was posted on the bulletin board of a Los Angeles police station, and only after the concerted efforts of various Negro organizations was this scurrilous pamphlet removed.

CERTAINLY these were "aggravating factors" that the McCone Report should properly have mentioned. But what is more important to understand is that even if every policeman in every black ghetto behaved like an angel and were trained in the most progressive of police academies, the conflict would still exist. This is so because the ghetto is a place where Negroes do not want to be and are fighting to get out of. When someone with a billy club and a gun tells you to behave yourself amid these terrible circumstances, he becomes a zoo keeper, demanding of you, as one of "these monkeys" (to use Chief Parker's phrase), that you accept abhorrent conditions. He is brutalizing you by insisting that you tolerate what you cannot, and ought not, tolerate.

In its blithe ignorance of such feelings, the McCone Report offers as one of its principal suggestions that speakers be sent to Negro schools to teach the students that the police are their friends and that their interests are best served by respect for law and order. Such public-relations gimmicks, of course, are futile—it is hardly a lack of contact with the police that creates the problem. Nor, as I have suggested, is it only a matter of prejudice. The fact is that when Negroes are deprived of work, they resort to selling numbers, women, or dope to earn a living; they must gamble and work in poolrooms. And when the policeman upholds the law, he is depriving them of their livelihood. A clever criminal in the Negro ghettoes is not unlike a clever "operator" in the white business world, and so long as Negroes are denied legitimate opportunities, no exhortations to obey the rules of the society and to regard the police as friends will have any effect.

This is not to say that relations between the police and the Negroes of Watts could not be improved. Mayor Yorty and Police Chief Parker might have headed off a full-scale riot had they refrained from denouncing the Negro leaders and agreed to meet with them early on. Over and over again—to repeat the point with which we began—the rioters claimed that violence was the only way they could get these officials to listen to them. The McCone Commission, however, rejects the proposal for an independent police review board and instead recommends that the post of Inspector General be established—under the authority of the Chief of Police—to handle grievances.

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THE CONDITIONS of Negro life in Watts are not, of course, ignored by the McCone Report. Their basic structure is outlined in a section entitled "Dull, Devastating Spiral of Failure." Here we find that the Negro's "homelife destroys incentive"; that he lacks "experience with words and ideas"; that he is "unready and unprepared" in school; and that, "unprepared and unready," he "*slips* into the ranks of the unemployed" (my italics).

I would say, *is shoved*. It is time that we began to understand this "dull, devastating spiral of failure" and that we stopped attributing it to this or that characteristic of Negro life. In 1940, Edward Wight Bakke described the effects of unemployment on family structure in terms of the following model: The jobless man no longer provides, credit runs out, the woman is forced to take a job; if relief then becomes necessary, the woman is regarded even more as the center of the family; the man is dependent on her, the children are bewildered, and the stability of the family is threatened and often shattered. Bakke's research dealt strictly with white families. The fact that Negro social scientists like E. Franklin Frazier and Kenneth Clark have shown that this pattern is typical among the Negro poor does not mean, then, that it stems from some inherent Negro trait or is the ineluctable product of Negro social history. If Negroes suffer more than others from the problems of family instability today, it is not because they are Negro but because they are so disproportionately unemployed, underemployed, and ill-paid.

Anyone looking for historical patterns would do well to consider the labor market for Negroes since the Emancipation. He will find that Negro men have consistently been denied the opportunity to enter the labor force in anything like proportionate numbers, have been concentrated in the unskilled and marginal labor and service occupations, and have generally required wartime emergencies to make any advances in employment, job quality, and security. Such advances are then largely wiped out when the economy slumps again.

In 1948, for example, the rates of Negro and white unemployment were roughly equal. During the next decade, however, Negro unemployment was consistently double that of whites, and among Negro teenagers it remained at the disastrously high figure which prevailed for the entire population during the Depression. It is true that the nation's improved economic performance in recent years has reduced the percentage of jobless Negroes from 12.6 per cent, which it reached in 1958 (12.5 per cent in 1961) to roughly 8.1 per cent today. Despite this progress, the rate of Negro unemployment continues to be twice as high as white (8.13 per cent as against 4.2 per cent). In other words, job discrimination remains constant. These statistics, moreover, conceal the persistence of Negro youth unemployment: in 1961, 24.7 per cent of those Negro teenagers not in school were out of work and it is estimated that in 1966 this incredible rate will only decline to 23.2 per cent. What this figure tells us is that the rise in Negro employment has largely resulted from the calling of men with previous experience back to work. This is an ominous trend, for it is estimated that in the coming year, 20 per cent of the new entrants into the labor force will be Negro (almost twice as high as the Negro percentage of the population). Approximately half of these young Negroes will not have the equivalent of a high-school education and they will be competing in an economy in which the demand for skill and training is increasing sharply.

Thus there is bound to be a further deterioration of the Negro's economic—and hence social—position, despite the important political victories being achieved by the civil-rights movement. For many young Negroes, who are learning that economic servitude can be as effective an instrument of discrimination as racist laws, the new "freedom" has already become a bitter thing indeed. No wonder that the men of Watts were incensed by reports that the poverty program was being obstructed in Los Angeles by administrative wrangling. (As I write this, the New York *Times* reports that political rivalries and ambitions have now virtually paralyzed the program in that area.)

HOW DOES THE McCone Report propose to halt this "dull, devastating spiral of failure"? First, through education—"our fundamental resource." The commission's analysis begins with a comparison of class size in white and Negro areas (the latter are referred to throughout as "disadvantaged areas" and Negro schools, as "disadvantaged schools"). It immediately notes that classes in the disadvantaged schools are slightly smaller; on the other hand, the more experienced teachers are likely to be found in the *non*-disadvantaged areas, and there is tremendous overcrowding in the disadvantaged schools because of double sessions. The buildings in the "disadvantaged areas are in better repair"; on the other hand, there are "cafeterias in the advantaged schools" but not in the disadvantaged schools, which also have no libraries. This random balance sheet of "resources" shows no sense of priorities; moreover, despite the alarming deficiencies it uncovers in the "disadvantaged schools," the McCone Report, in consistent fashion, places its emphasis on the Negro child's "deficiency in environmental experiences" and on "his homelife [which] all too often fails to give him incentive. . . ."

The two major recommendations of the commission in this area will hardly serve to correct the imbalances revealed. The first is that elementary and junior high schools in the "disadvantaged areas" which have achievement levels substantially below the city average should be designated "Emergency Schools." In each of these schools an emergency literacy program is to be established

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with a maximum of 22 students in each class and an enlarged and supportive corps of teachers. The second recommendation is to establish a permanent pre-school program to help prepare three- and four-year-old children to read and write.

W. T. Bassett, executive secretary of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO, has criticized the report for its failure to deal with education and training for adolescents and adults who are no longer in school. Another glaring omission is of a specific plan to decrease school segregation. While most of us now agree that the major goal of American education must be that of quality integrated schools, we cannot, as even the report suggests, achieve the quality without at the same time moving toward integration. The stated goal of the McCone Commission, however, is to "reverse the trend of de facto segregation" by improving the quality of the Negro schools: in short, separate but equal schools that do not disturb the existing social patterns which isolate the Negro child in his "disadvantaged areas."

That the commission's explicit concern for Negro problems falls short of its implicit concern for the status quo is also evident in its proposals for housing. It calls for the liberalization of credit and FHA-insured loans in "disadvantaged areas," the implementation of rehabilitation measures and other urban-renewal programs and, as its particular innovation, the creation of a "wide area data bank." Meanwhile it refuses to discuss, much less to criticize, the effect of Proposition 14 or to recommend a new fair-housing code. To protect the Negro against discrimination, the McCone Report supports the creation of a Commission on Human Relations, but does not present any proposals that would enable it to do more than collect information and conduct public-relations campaigns.

THE MOST crucial section of the report is the one on employment and, not unexpectedly, it is also the most ignorant, unimaginative, and conservative—despite its dramatic recommendation that 50,000 new jobs be created. On the matter of youth unemployment, the report suggests that the existing federal projects initiate a series of "attitudinal training" programs to help young Negroes develop the necessary motivation to hold on to these new jobs which are to come from somewhere that the commission keeps secret. This is just another example of the commission's continued reliance on public relations, and of its preoccupation with the "dull, devastating spiral" of Negro failure. The truth of the matter is that Negro youths cannot change their attitudes until they see that they can get jobs. When what they see is unemployment and their Economic Opportunity programs being manipulated in behalf of politicians, their attitudes will remain realistically cynical.

Once again, let me try to cut through the obscurantism which has increasingly come to cloud this issue of Negro attitudes. I am on a committee which administers the Apprenticeship Training Program of the Workers Defense League. For many years the League had heard that there were not enough Negro applicants to fill the various openings for apprenticeship training and had also repeatedly been told by vocational-school counselors that Negro students could not pay attention to key subjects such as English and mathematics. The League began its own recruitment and placement program two years ago and now has more than 500 apprentice applicants on file. When, last fall, Local 28 of the Sheetmetal Workers Union—to take one example—announced that a new admission test for apprentices was to be given soon, the League contacted those applicants who had indicated an interest in sheetmetal work. The young men came to the office, filled out a 10-page application form, filed a ten-dollar fee, and returned it to the Local 28 office. Then, five nights a week for three weeks, they came to Harlem, in many cases from Brooklyn and Queens, to be tutored. Most of the young men showed up for all fifteen sessions, and scored well on the test. At their interviews they were poised and confident. Eleven of these men finally were admitted to a class of 33. The WDL doesn't attribute this success to a miraculous program; it merely knows that when young people are told that at the end of a given period of study those who perform well will obtain decent work, then their attitudes will be markedly different from those who are sent off to a work camp with vague promises.

To cut the cost of job training programs, the McCone Commission avers that compensation "should not be necessary for those trainees who are receiving welfare support." Earlier in the report the authors point out that welfare services tend to destroy family life by giving more money to a woman who lives alone; yet they have the audacity to ask that the practice of not allowing men who are on family relief to earn an additional income be maintained for young men who are working and being trained. How is a young man to be adequately motivated if he cannot feel that his work is meaningful and necessary? The McCone Report would have us say to him, "There, there, young man, we're going to keep you off the streets—just putter around doing this make-work." But the young man knows that he can collect welfare checks and also hustle on street corners to increase his earnings. A man's share of a welfare allotment is pitifully small, but more than that, he should be paid for his work; and if one is interested in his morale, he should not be treated as a charity case.

Continuing with the problem of employment, the report recommends that "there should immediately be developed in the affected area a job training and placement center through the combined efforts of Negroes, employers, labor unions and government." In the absence of actual jobs, this would mean merely setting up a new division,

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albeit voluntary, of the unemployment insurance program. "Federal and state governments should seek to insure through development of new facilities and additional means of communication that advantage is taken of government and private training programs and employment opportunities in our disadvantaged communities." Perhaps the only thing the Job Corps program doesn't lack is publicity: last summer it received ten times as many applications as it could handle. Nor can new types of information centers and questionnaires provide 50,000 new jobs. They may provide positions for social workers and vocational counselors, but very few of them will be unemployed Negroes.

The report goes on: "Legislation should be enacted requiring employers with more than 250 employees and all labor unions to report annually to the state Fair Employment Practices Commission, the racial composition of the work force and membership." But an FEP Commission that merely collects information and propaganda is powerless. And even with the fullest cooperation of labor and management to promote equality of opportunity, the fact remains that there are not enough jobs in the Los Angeles area to go around, even for those who are fortunate enough to be included in the retraining programs. As long as unions cannot find work for many of their own members, there is not much they can do to help unemployed Negroes. And the McCone Report places much of its hope in private enterprise, whose response so far has been meager. The highest estimate of the number of jobs given to Los Angeles Negroes since the Watts crisis is less than 1,000.

THE NEGRO slums today are ghettoes of despair. In Watts, as elsewhere, there are the unemployable poor: the children, the aging, the permanently handicapped. No measure of employment or of economic growth will put an end to their misery, and only government programs can provide them with a decent way of life. The care of these people could be made a major area of job growth. Los Angeles officials could immediately train and put to work women and unemployed youths as school attendants, recreation counselors, practical nurses, and community workers. The federal government and the state of California could aid the people of Watts by beginning a massive public-works program to build needed housing, schools, hospitals, neighborhood centers, and transportation facilities: this, too, would create new jobs. In short, they could begin to develop the $100-billion freedom budget advocated by A. Philip Randolph.

Such proposals may seem impractical and even incredible. But what is truly impractical and incredible is that America, with its enormous wealth, has allowed Watts to become what it is and that a commission empowered to study this explosive situation should come up with answers that boil down to voluntary actions by business and labor, new public-relations campaigns for municipal agencies, and information-gathering for housing, fair-employment, and welfare departments. The Watts manifesto is a response to realities that the McCone Report is barely beginning to grasp. Like the liberal consensus which it embodies and reflects, the commission's imagination and political intelligence appear paralyzed by the hard facts of Negro deprivation it has unearthed, and it lacks the political will to demand that the vast resources of contemporary America be used to build a genuinely great society that will finally put an end to these deprivations. And what is most impractical and incredible of all is that we may very well continue to teach impoverished, segregated, and ignored Negroes that the only way they can get the ear of America is to rise up in violence.

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NORMAN MAILER

MODES AND MUTATIONS

Quick Comments on the Modern American Novel

TRUST ME for a time. Indulge me. Assume I am a lecturer in the fields of Fellowship and am trying to draw a grand design in twenty minutes. Knowing attention is iron for the blood of a lecturer, I will pick a title—"The Dynamic of American Literature," as preparation for a lightning discussion of *Herzog* and Terry Southern with a coda on the Art of the Absurd. And for a first sentence I would say: There has been a war at the center of American letters for a long time. (The look of absolute comprehension on the face of the audience encourages the lecturer to go on.)

The war began as a class war; an upper-middle class looked for a development of its taste, a definition of its manners, a refinement of itself to prepare a shift to the aristocratic; that was its private demand upon culture. That demand is still being made by a magazine called *The New Yorker*. This upper-class development of literature was invaded a long time ago, however, back at the cusp of the century, by a counter-literature whose roots were found in poverty, industrial society, and the emergence of new class. It was a literature which grappled with a peculiarly American phenomenon—a tendency of American society to alter more rapidly than the ability of its artists to record that change. Now, of course, one might go back two thousand years into China to find a society which did not alter more rapidly than its culture, but the American phenomenon had to do with the very rate of acceleration. The order of magnitude in this rate had shifted. It was as if everything changed ten times as fast in America, and this made for extraordinary difficulty in creating a literature. The sound, sensible, morally stout delineation of society which one found in Tolstoy and Balzac and Zola, in Thackeray and in Trollope, had become impossible. The American novelist of manners had to content himself with manners—he could not put a convincing servant into his work, and certainly not a workingman, because they were moving themselves in one generation out from the pantry into the morning dress of the lady in the parlor and up from the foundry to the master of the factory. The novelist of manners could not go near these matters—they promised to take over all of his book. So the job was left to Howells, Stephen Crane, to Dreiser, and in lesser degree to such writers as Norris, Jack London, Upton Sinclair—let us say it was left to Dreiser. A fundamental irony of American letters had now presented itself. For in opposition to Dreiser was the imperfectly developed counter-tradition of the genteel. The class which wielded the power which ran America, and the class which most admired that class, banded instinctively together to approve a genteel literature which had little to do with power or the secrets of power. They encouraged a literature about courtship and marriage and love and play and devotion and piety and style, a literature which had to do finally with the *excellence* of belonging to their own genteel tradition. Thus it was a literature which borrowed the forms of its conduct from European models. The people who were most American by birth, and who had the most to do with managing America, gave themselves a literature which had the least to say about the real phenomena of American life, most particularly the accelerated rate, the awful rate, of growth and anomaly through all of society. That sort of literature and that kind of attempt to explain America was left to the sons of immigrants who, if they were vigorous enough, and fortunate enough to be educated, now had the opportunity to see that America was a phenomenon never before described, indeed never before visible in the record of history. There was something going on in American life which was either grand or horrible or both, but it was going on—at a dizzy rate—and the future glory or doom of the world was not necessarily divorced from it. Dreiser labored like a titan to capture the phenomenon; he became a titan; Thomas Wolfe, his only peer as giant (as the novelist-as-giant), labored also like a titan, but for half as long and died in terror of the gargantuan proportions of the task. Yet each failed in one part of the job. They were able to describe society—Wolfe like the greatest five-year-old who ever lived,* an invaluable achievement, and Dreiser like some heroic tragic entrepreneur who

NORMAN MAILER's most recent novel is *An American Dream*. The present piece was read last December at the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago. It will also be included in Mr. Mailer's forthcoming book, *Cannibals and Christians*, to be published by the Dial Press in May.

*This remark brought laughter from the audience. Since I did not wish to insult the memory of Wolfe, it would have been happier and perhaps more accurate to have said: like the greatest fifteen-year-old alive.

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has reasoned out through his own fatigue and travail very much how everything works in the iron mills of life, but is damned because he cannot pass on the knowledge to his children. Dreiser and Wolfe were up from the people, and Dreiser particularly came closer to understanding the social machine than any American writer who ever lived, but he paid an unendurable price—he was forced to alienate himself from manner in order to learn the vast amount he learned. Manner insists one learn at a modest rate, that one learn each step with grace before going on to the next. Dreiser was in a huge hurry, he had to learn everything—that was the way he must have felt his mission, so there is nothing of manner in his work; which is to say nothing of tactics.

IF THE upper class quite naturally likes a literature which is good for them, a literature at the surface perhaps trivial, but underneath amusing, elucidative, *fortifying*, it is because this kind of literature elaborates and clarifies the details of their life, and thus adjusts their sense of power, their upper-class sense of power, which is invariably lubricated by a sense of detail. So too does that other class of readers in American literature, that huge, loose, all but unassociated congregation of readers —immigrant, proletarian, entrepreneur—wish in turn for a literature which is equally good for them. That is where Dreiser had to fail. He was only half-good for such readers. He taught them strategy as Americans had never gotten it before in a novel. If they were adventurers, he was almost as useful to them as Stendhal was exceptionally useful to a century of French intellectuals who had come to Paris from the provinces. But not quite. Dreiser, finally, is not quite as useful, and the difference is crucial. Because a young adventurer reads a great novel in the unvoiced hope it is a grindstone which sharpens his axe sufficiently to smash down doors now locked to him. Dreiser merely located the doors and gave warnings about the secret padlocks and the traps. But he had no grindstone, no manner, no eye for the deadly important manners of the rich, he was obliged to call a rich girl "charming"; he could not make her charming when she spoke, as Fitzgerald could, and so he did not really prepare the army of his readers for what was ahead. His task was doubly difficult—it was required of him to give every upstart fresh strategy and tactics. No less than the secret sociology of society is what is needed by the upstart and that strategy Dreiser gave him. But tactics—the manners of the drawing room, the deaths and lifes of the drawing room, the cocktail party, the glorious tactics of the individual kill—that was all beyond him. Dreiser went blind climbing the mountains of society, so he could not help anyone to see what was directly before him—only what had happened and what was likely to come next.

That was the initial shape of the war, Naturalism versus the Genteel Tradition it has been called, and one might pose Henry James against Dreiser, but James is sufficiently great a writer to violate the generalizations one must make about the novel of manners which must always—precisely because it deals with manners—eschew the overambitious, plus extremes of plot—which James of course did not. So let us say the war was between Dreiser and Edith Wharton, Dreiser all strategy, no tactics; and Wharton all tactics. Marvelous tactics they were—a jewel of a writer and stingy as a parson—she needed no strategy. The upper-class writer had all strategy provided him by the logic of his class. Maybe that is why the war never came to decision, or even to conclusion. No upper-class writer went down into the pits to bring back the manner alive of the change going on *down there*, certainly not Edith Wharton, not James Branch Cabell, of course not, nor Hergesheimer nor even Cather or Glasgow, not Elinor Wylie, no, nor Carl Van Vechten, and no diamond in the rough was ever reshaped by the cutters of Newport. The gap in American letters continued. Upper-class writers like John Dos Passos made brave efforts to go down and get the stuff and never quite got it, mainly in Dos Passos's case because they lacked strategy for the depths—manners may be sufficient to delineate the rich but one needs a vision of society to comprehend the poor, and Dos Passos had only revulsion at injustice, which is ultimately a manner. Some upper-class writers like Fitzgerald turned delicately upon the suppositions of their class, lost all borrowed strategy and were rudderless, were forced therefore to become superb in tactics, but for this reason perhaps a kind of hysteria lived at the center of their work; lower-class writers like Farrell and Steinbeck described whole seas of the uncharted ocean but their characters did not push from one milieu into another, and so the results were more taxonomic than apocalyptic.

SINCE then the war has shifted. No writer succeeded in doing the single great work which would clarify a nation's vision of itself as Tolstoy had done perhaps with *War and Peace* or *Anna Karenina*, and Stendhal with *The Red and the Black*, no one novel came along which was grand and daring and comprehensive and detailed, able to give sustenance to the adventurer and merriment to the rich, leave compassion in the ice-chambers of the upper class and energy as alms for the poor. (Not unless it was *Tropic of Cancer*.) Dreiser came as close as any, and never got close at all, for he could not capture the moment, and after his heroic failure, American literature was isolated—it was necessary to give courses in American literature to Americans, either because they would not otherwise read it, or because reading it, they could not understand it. It was not quite vital to them. It did not save their lives, make them more ambitious, more moral, more tormented, more audacious, more ready for

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love, more ready for war, for charity and for invention. No, it tended to puzzle them. The realistic literature had never caught up with the rate of change in American life, indeed it had fallen further and further behind, and the novel gave up any desire to be a creation equal to the phenomenon of the country itself; it settled for being a metaphor. Which is to say that each separate author made a separate peace. He would no longer try to capture America, he would merely try to give life to some microcosm in American life, some metaphor—in the sense that a drop of water is a metaphor of the seas, or a hair of the beast is for some a metaphor of the beast—and in that metaphor he might—if he were very lucky—have it all, rich and poor, strategy and tactics, insight and manner, detail, authority, the works. He would have it all for a particular few. It was just that he was no longer writing about the beast but, as in the case of Hemingway (if we are to take the best of this), about the paw of the beast, or in Faulkner about the dreams of the beast. What a paw and what dreams! Perhaps they are the two greatest writers America ever had, but they had given up on trying to do it all. Their vision was partial, determinedly so, they saw that as the first condition for trying to be great—that one must not try to save. Not souls, and not the nation. The desire for majesty was the bitch which licked at the literary loins of Hemingway and Faulkner: the country could be damned. Let it take care of itself.

And of course the country did. Just that. It grew by itself. Like a weed and a monster and a beauty and a pig. And the task of explaining America was taken over by Luce magazines. Those few aristocratic novelistic sensibilities which had never seen the task of defining the country as one for them—it was finally most unamusing as a task—grew smaller and smaller and more and more superb. Edith Wharton reappeared as Truman Capote, even more of a jewel, even stingier. Of writers up from the bottom there were numbers: Dreiser's nephews were as far apart as Saul Bellow and James Jones. But the difference between the two kinds of writers had shifted. It had begun to shift somewhere after the Second World War, and the shift had gone a distance. One could not speak at all now of aristocratic writers and novelists whose work was itself the protagonist to carry the writer and his readers through the locks of society; no, the work had long since retreated, the great ambition was gone, and then it was worse, even the metaphor was gone, the paw of the beast and the dreams of the beast, no, literature was down to the earnest novel and the perfect novel, to moral seriousness and Camp. Herzog and Candy had become the protagonists.

Frank Cowperwood once amassed an empire. Herzog, his bastard great-nephew, diddled in the ruins of an intellectual warehouse. Where once the realistic novel cut a swath across the face of society, now its reality was concentrated into moral seriousness. Where the original heroes of naturalism had been active, bold, self-centered, close to tragic, and up to the nostrils in their exertions to advance their own life and force the webs of society, so the hero of moral earnestness, the hero Herzog and the hero Levin in Malamud's *A New Life,* are men who represent the contrary—passive, timid, other-directed, pathetic, up to the nostrils in anguish: the world is stronger than they are; suicide calls.

Malamud's hero is more active than Herzog, he is also more likeable, but these positive qualities keep the case from being so pure. There is a mystery about the reception of *Herzog.* For beneath its richness of texture and its wealth of detail, the fact remains: never has a novel been so successful when its hero was so dim. Not one of the critics who adored the book would ever have permitted Herzog to remain an hour in his house. For Herzog was defeated, Herzog was an unoriginal man, Herzog was a fool—not an attractive God-anointed fool like Gimpel the Fool, his direct progenitor, but a sodden fool, over-educated and inept, unable to fight, able to love only when love presented itself as a gift. Herzog was intellectual but not bright, his ideas not original, his style as it appeared in his letters unendurable—it had exactly the leaden-footed sense of phrase which men laden with anxiety and near to going mad put into their communications. Herzog was hopeless. We learned nothing about society from him, not even anything about his life. And he is the only figure in the book. His wives, his mistress, his family, his children, his friends, even the man who cuckolds him are seen on the periphery of a dimming vision. Like all men near to being mad, his attention is within, but the inner attention is without genius. Herzog is dull, he is unendurably dull—he is like all those bright pedagogical types who have a cavity at the center of their brain.

YET THE novel succeeds. There is its mystery. One reads it with compassion. With rare compassion. Bored by Herzog, still there is a secret burning of the heart. One's heart turns over and produces a sorrow. Hardly any books are left to do that.

Of course, Herzog is alive on sufferance. He is a beggar, an extraordinary beggar who fixes you with his eye, his breath, his clothing, his dank near-corrupt presence; he haunts. Something goes on in Herzog's eye. It says: I am debased, I am failed, I am near to rotten, and yet something just as good and loving resides in me as the tenderest part of your childhood. If the prophet Elijah sent me, it is not to make you feel guilt but to weep. Suddenly, Herzog inspires sorrow—touch of alchemy to the book—Herzog is at the center of the modern dilemma. If we do not feel compassion for him, a forceful compassion which sends blood to warm the limbs and the heart, then we are going to be forced to shoot him. Because if Herzog does

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not arouse your compassion there is no other choice—he is too intolerable a luxury to keep alive in his mediocrity unless he arouses your love. The literary world chose to love him. We were not ready to shoot Herzog. It all seemed too final if we did. Because then there would be nothing left but Camp, and Camp is the art of the cannibal, Camp is the art which evolved out of the bankruptcy of the novel of manners. It is the partial thesis of these twenty minutes that the pure novel of manners had watered down from *The House of Mirth* to the maudlin middle reaches of *The Rector of Justin*; had in fact gone all the way down the pike from *The Ambassadors* to *By Love Possessed*. So, one does not speak of the novel of manners any longer—one is obliged to look at the documentary, *In Cold Blood*—or one is obliged to look at satire. The aristocratic impulse turned upon itself produced one classic—Terry Southern's *The Magic Christian*. Never had distaste for the habits of a mass mob reached such precision, never did wit falter in its natural assumption that the idiocies of the mass were attached breath and kiss to the hypocrisies, the weltering grandeurs, and the low stupidities of the rich, the American rich. The aristocratic impulse to define society by evocations of manner now survived only in the grace of any cannibal sufficiently aristocratic to sup upon his own family. *The Magic Christian* was a classic of Camp.

Note then: The two impulses in American letters had failed, the realistic impulse never delivered the novel which would ignite a nation's consciousness of itself, and the aristocratic impulse clawed at the remaining fabric of a wealthy society it despised and no longer wished to sustain. Like a Tinguely machine which destroys itself, Camp amused by the very act of its destruction. Since it was also sentimental, the artifacts were necrophiliac.

Literature then had failed. The work was done by the movies, by television. The consciousness of the masses and the culture of the land trudged through endless mud.

The American consciousness in the absence of a great tradition in the novel ended by being developed by the bootlicking pieties of small-town newspaper editors and small-town educators, by the worst of organized religion, a formless force filled with the terrors of all the Christians left to fill the spaces left by the initial bravery of the frontiersman, and these latterday Christians were simply not as brave. That was one component of the mud. The other was the sons of the immigrants. Many of them hated America, hated it for what it offered and did not provide, what it revealed of opportunity and what it excluded from real opportunity. The sons of these immigrants and the sons' sons took over the cities and began to run them, high up in the air and right down into the ground, they plucked and they plundered and there was not an American city which did not grow more hideous in the last fifty years. Then they spread out—they put suburbs like blight on the land—and piped mass communications into every home. They were cannibals selling Christianity to Christians, and because they despised the message and mocked at it in their own heart, they succeeded in selling something else, a virus perhaps, an electronic nihilism went through the mass media of America and entered the Christians and they were like to being cannibals, they were a tense and livid people, swallowing their own hate with the tranquilizers and the sex in the commercials, whereas all the early cannibals at the knobs of the mass-media made the mistake of passing on their bleak disease and were left now too gentle, too liberal, too programmatic, filled with plans for social welfare, and they looked and talked in Show Biz styles which possessed no style and were generally as unhealthy as Christians who lived in cellars and caves.

YES, THE cannibal sons of the immigrants had become Christians, and the formless form they had evolved for their mass-media, the hypocritical empty and tasteless taste of the television arts they beamed across the land encountered the formless form and the all but tasteless taste of the small-town tit-eating cannibal mind at its worst, and the collision produced schizophrenia in the land. Half of America went insane with head colds and medicaments and asthmas and allergies, hospitals and famous surgeons with knives to cut into the plague, welfares and plans and committees and cooperations and boredom, boredom plague deep upon the land; and the other part of America went ape, and the motorcycles began to roar like lions across the land and all the beasts of all the buried history of America turned in their circuit and prepared to slink toward the market place, there to burn the mother's hair and bite the baby to the heart. One thought of America and one thought of aspirin, kitchen-commercials, and blood. Hot damn, Vietnam. And the important art in America became the art of the absurd.

WRITING IS not an act to excite tolerance. Maybe there has been nothing more catastrophic to America than the failure of its novelists, maybe we are the last liberators in the land, and if we continue to thrive on much less than our best, then the being of all of us may be deadened before we are done.

That is a statement which sups on the essence of extravagance, and yet it is the distance of the bridge to be built. It may be necessary that a communication of human experience, of the deepest and most unrecoverable human experience, must yet take place if we are to survive. Such at least is the covert opinion beneath the criticism you have just been kind enough to attend.

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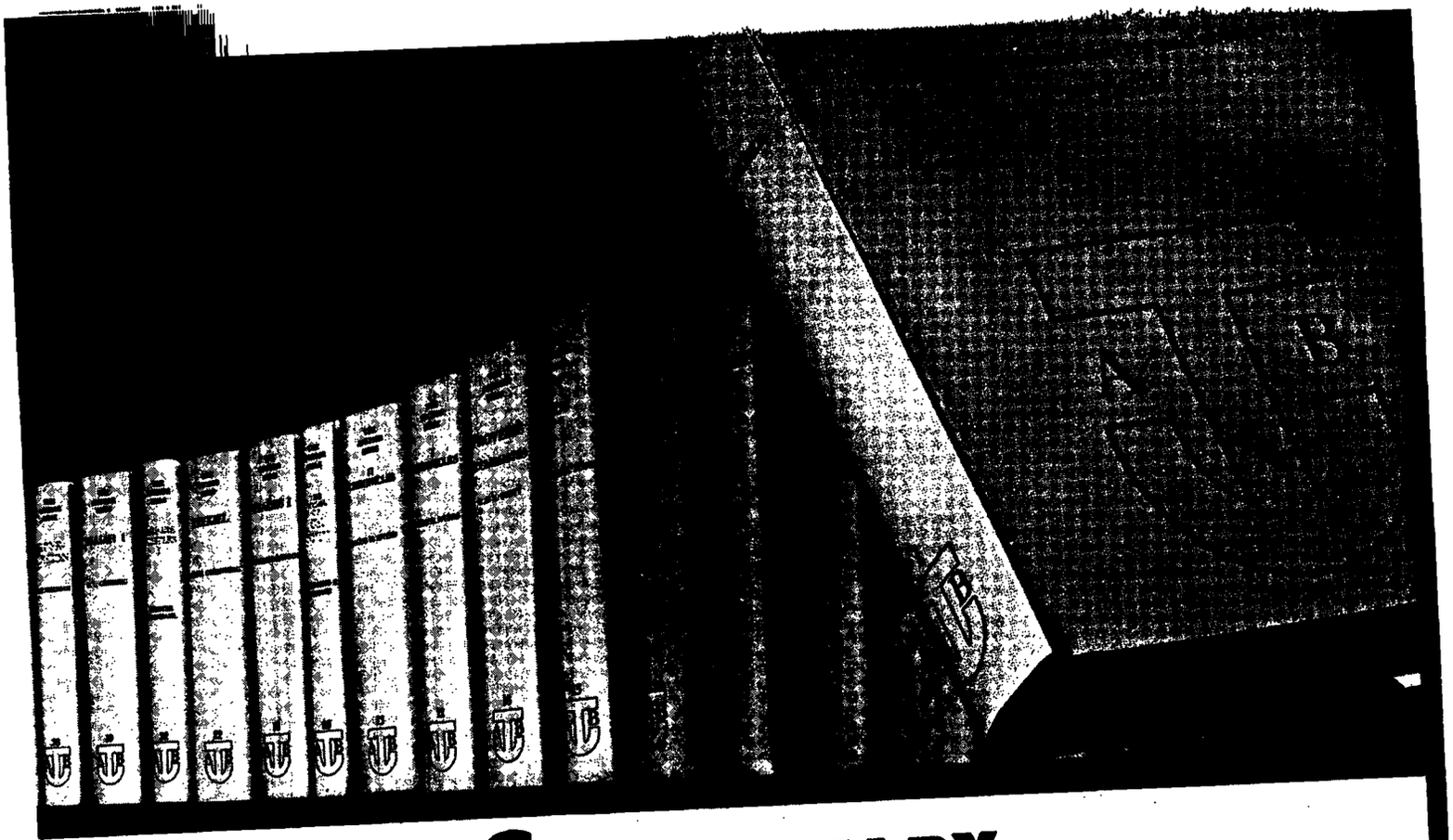

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*David Daiches, COMMENTARY, September 1965

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CHAIM POTOK

MARTIN BUBER AND THE JEWS

IT WAS a source of considerable anguish and frustration to Martin Buber that he was more appreciated by Christians than by Jews. Though he addressed himself to the world, Buber regarded his thought as firmly rooted in Judaism and he persistently refused to sever his writings from their Jewish moorings. Jews, however, have generally continued to look upon his efforts with suspicion and to regard them as outside the mainstream of Jewish thought. This is not to say that he went unrecognized by his people; he was often the object of mass adulation. But it was the kind of adulation a people accords to those of its great personalities who have somehow carved a place for themselves in the world at large, yet who remain basically unacceptable at home. In Israel, where he lived for the last twenty-odd years of his life, he was a myth of sorts. But except for a small group of admirers, Israelis have remained singularly unimpressed by his writings. A similar attitude toward Buber prevails among American and British Jews. His most loyal audience consists largely of those contemporary Protestant thinkers who are disillusioned with what they take to be the excessive rationalism of liberal Protestant theology. At first glance, such a situation suggests the workings of an incomprehensibly bizarre and absurd fate. But this is hardly the case. Given the central idea of his philosophy, together with the circumstances in which this idea developed, the nature of Buber's present audience seems almost inevitable.

How did it come about that the most influential Jewish philosopher of our time has nevertheless been largely rejected by his own people? One needs to know something not only about Buber but also about his era before one can give a proper answer to this question.

THE 19TH century was witness to a major turning point in Western civilization; door after door slammed shut upon the comforting certainties of the past. A new historiography focused its attention upon long-hallowed texts and traditions and called into question much of what had been accepted as truth for two thousand years; a new science offered an apparently flawless mechanistic model of the universe, thereby putting the final nail into the coffin of Aristotelian physics; a new anthropology buttressed the idea of cultural relativism with a considerable body of accurate scientific information; a new biology plucked man from his central position in the scheme of things and revealed to him his simian progenitors; a new philosophy, promulgated by Nietzsche, reduced Western values and philosophical system-building to rubble; a new view of human progress looked upon revolution and the class struggle as the inexorable dialectic of history; a renewed secularism suddenly found its voice and posed an open threat to established religion; a new psychology saw man as moved by inner forces which he could discover and comprehend only with the utmost difficulty.

It was amidst this turbulence that the German Jews of the 19th century struggled for their rights as citizens. In France, the process of emancipation was relatively swift and smooth, a direct outcome of the Revolution; in Germany, the process was filled with anguish and torment, and full emancipation was not achieved until 1871. During much of the 19th century, therefore, German Jews, in the face of considerable anti-Semitism, were striving to prove themselves as German as the Germans themselves—and often more so. Jewish historiographers began to lay bare the dynamics of Jewish history by applying to classical Jewish texts the same principles that German scholars were applying to the great texts of the non-Jewish world. Abraham Geiger succeeded in creating an ideology for the Reform movement; Samson Raphael Hirsch solidified the ranks of Western-oriented traditionalist Jews; and Zechariah Frankel laid the theoretical groundwork for the later birth of Conservative Judaism in America. This entire effort—even that of Hirsch—was geared toward making Judaism appear acceptable, palatable, and rational both to Jews and non-Jews.

Eastern European Jewry, by contrast, managed for the most part to hold fast against the inroads of the times—despite Moses Mendelssohn's followers in that part of the world and the Russo-Jewish proponents of modernism. The Hasidim and their Talmud-oriented opponents, who had hated one another bitterly for fifty years, now joined to-

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gether against a common enemy: the Enlightenment. East confronted West across a chasm of suspicion, mistrust, and loathing, each convinced that the other was destroying Judaism.

This was the climate in which Martin Buber was born, raised, and educated.

BUBER was born in Vienna in 1878. Because his parents were divorced, he spent much of his youth in Poland in the home of his grandparents. His grandfather, Salomon Buber, was—unique combination—both an enlightened Jew and a devout pietist. A successful banker, community leader, scholarly editor of classical rabbinic texts, and Hebraist, he nevertheless prayed in a tiny Hasidic synagogue, using a prayer book replete with Kabbalistic instructions. Martin Buber's first encounters with Hasidism—the movement that was later to be one of the most significant factors in the shaping of his thought—took place during those early years in his grandfather's home, and during the summers he spent with his father, who would take him to the Galician village of Sadagora, the dynastic seat of a leading Hasidic rabbi.

The youthful Buber was much impressed by what he saw, but this early fascination with Hasidism faded quickly. By the time Buber began his secondary-school education in a Polish *Gymnasium*, he had abandoned all pretense to ritual piety, and during his early years at the University of Vienna, which he entered in 1896, as well as in the brief time he spent at the University of Berlin, he gave little indication of any concern with things Jewish. His intellectual heroes at this period were Nietzsche, whom Buber regarded as the creator of a new system of values, and Wilhelm Dilthey, whose careful distinction between knowledge in the natural sciences and the social sciences—the former characterized by cool, objective detachment, the latter by intense personal participation—was to provide Buber with the methodology for exploring the realm of dialogue. His spiritual heroes were Christian mystics—Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa—and his doctoral dissertation was devoted to a study of Christian mysticism in the Renaissance and Reformation.

In this part of his life, then, Buber gave little thought to his Jewish past—but the past refused to release him. Out of a growing sense of alienation from a Western soil in which he had no roots, Buber started on his way back to Judaism by becoming a Zionist. In this regard he was no different from thousands of other Jews who were disenchanted with institutionalized religious life, but whose loyalty to their people and heritage was of sufficient intensity to bring them into the religiously neutral fold of modern Zionism. Thus in 1901, Buber joined the staff of the Zionist publication *Die Welt*. Soon, however, he grew dissatisfied with Herzl's political Zionism, which argued for the establishment of a Jewish state solely as a protective measure against anti-Semitism. Thereupon he became one of the leading advocates of the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am, which envisioned a small community of Jews, rooted in the soil of Palestine, as the vital center of a world-wide Jewish cultural renaissance that would enable Judaism to resume its creative role in Western civilization.

Buber's early preoccupation with Zionism was the first step he took toward a new profession of Judaism. The next step followed quickly: a hunger to know more about that which he was beginning to profess. And knowing, for Buber, meant not merely the storing up of factual information, but also "the eye-to-eye knowing of the people in its creative primal hours." He embarked upon a systematic attempt to master the Hebrew language, which he had neglected since his youth. During this time there occurred one of those strange, forever mysterious, triggering events akin to the celebrated *madeleine* episode in Proust's life. In 1904, Buber came across a little book purporting to be the testament of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism. He was particularly struck by a passage describing the man of true piety: "He takes unto himself the quality of fervor, for he is hallowed and become another man and is worthy to create and is become like the Holy One, blessed be He, when He created His world." Years later, in *My Way To Hasidism*, Buber gave a vivid account of his reaction to that passage:

> It was then that, overpowered in an instant, I experienced the Hasidic soul. The primarily Jewish opened to me, flowering to newly conscious expression in the darkness of exile: man's being created in the image of God I grasped as deed, as becoming, as task. And primarily Jewish reality was a primal human reality; the content of human religiousness, Judaism as religiousness, as "piety," as *Hasidut*, opened to me there. The image out of my childhood, the memory of the *zaddik* and his community, rose upward and illuminated me: I recognized the idea of the perfected man. At the same time, I became aware of the summons to proclaim it to the world.

Buber heeded the summons. He withdrew from all public activity—from participation in Zionism, from writing and lecturing—and immersed himself in the study of Hasidic literature. By the time he emerged from this voluntary isolation five years later, at the age of thirty-one, his mysticism and his Judaism, which had been developing along separate lines, had converged—and he was well on the way toward the discovery of his central idea. *I and Thou*, appearing some thirteen years later, in 1922, was Buber's first statement of his fully developed philosophy of dialogue—and it made him famous.

On the invitation of Franz Rosenzweig, Buber now joined the faculty of the *Freie Jüdische Lehr-*

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haus, which Rosenzweig had established in Frankfurt. This adult studies institute, which for a time had an enrollment of more than a thousand students, included among its faculty many of the men who were later to become great figures in the world of scholarship: Nahum Glatzer, Gershom Scholem, Ernst Simon, Leo Strauss. Agnon, the Hebrew novelist, taught there for a while; Erich Fromm gave a course in Rashi; Leo Baeck taught Talmud and medieval texts; and Buber lectured on his approach to religion and conducted a seminar on Hasidism. His courses immediately established him as a central figure in the *Lehrhaus.*

From 1923 to 1933, Buber was also on the faculty of the University of Frankfurt, where he taught Jewish philosophy of religion and the history of religions. In 1933, with Hitler already in power, Buber was still able to write with hope:

> Among all the national relationships into which the Jewish people has entered, with all the problems implied thereby, none has been as fruitful as the German-Jewish tie.

But two years later he realized that hope was futile: "The chamber no longer exists in which we can speak to others and be heard by them. Dialogue no longer exists."

He left Germany in 1938 and settled in Jerusalem, where he served as professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University. He died in June 1965. His legacy consists mainly of one overriding idea, to which we now turn our attention.

AT THE turn of the century, Germany experienced a renewed interest in mysticism. Buber, of course, was sympathetic to many elements of that revival: its opposition to the preoccupation with science and critical analysis; its stress on the power of creative imagination; its emphasis on the role of feeling and intuition; and especially its insistence on the radical uniqueness of each individual, which was to become one of the basic tenets of Buber's own thought.

Buber's attraction to mysticism arose from his intense concern with the problem of the relationship between the individual and the world. The ecstasy of the thinker as mystic was understood by Buber as the reason for the vitality of the thinker as creative participant in the stream of ordinary life. It was this aspect of mysticism, this ability of the mystic to return to the world renewed, that interested him. Buber began by positing the notion of an *already existing essential unity* which it was the task of the mystic to *discover* by means of his ecstatic experiences. Later, he modified this position in favor of one that emphasized the need to *realize* the unity of God and the world through a genuine and fulfilled human existence. And finally, largely as a result of his study of Hasidism, he came to the idea of the *meeting* of God and man in dialogical encounter.

The core of Buber's thought is perhaps best approached through two incidents he related in a work entitled *Dialogue.* The first tells of his encounter with an animal:

> When I was eleven years of age, spending the summer on my grandparents' estate, I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad dapple-grey horse. It was not a casual delight but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. . . . The horse, even when I had not begun by pouring oats for him into the manger, very gently raised his massive head, ears flicking, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognizable only by his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved. But once—I do not know what came over the child, at any rate it was childlike enough—it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before, but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing.

The second incident apparently occurred some time toward the end of Buber's five-year period of preoccupation with Hasidic literature:

> What happened was no more than that one forenoon, after a morning of "religious" enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly, I did not treat him any more remissly than all his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him—only I omitted to guess the questions he did not put. Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends—he himself was no longer alive—the essential content of those questions; I learned that he had come to me not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but for a decision.

RECOUNTING these incidents years after the publication of *I and Thou,* Buber attempted to explain them in terms of his philosophy of encounter. Concerning the experience with the animal, he wrote:

> If I am to explain it now, beginning from the still very fresh memory of my hand, I must say that what I experienced in touch with the animal was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other, which, however, did not remain strange like the otherness of the ox and the ram, but rather let me draw near and touch it. When I stroked the mighty mane, sometimes marvellously smooth-combed, at other times just as astonishingly wild, and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of *Thou* and *Thou* with me.

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And concerning his experience with the young man:

> He had come to me, he had come to me in this hour. What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man? Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning.

The encounter with the young man was crucial for Buber. It occurred at a time when Buber had been engaged in some sort of mystical experience and it led him to the realization that the mystic, by focusing so intently upon his own self, cuts himself off from all meaningful contact with other human beings. Expressed in terms of his philosophy of dialogue, the encounter with the young man is an example of the I-It relation; that with the animal, of the I-Thou.

According to Buber, man confronts the world with one of two possible attitudes. When he sees an object—be it man, animal, plant, or insensate thing—as something to be manipulated, exploited, or objectively experienced, he confronts it as an It to his I. When, however, he encounters it as Buber encountered the animal, he confronts it as a Thou to his I. The sphere of Buber's philosophical exploration is relation or betweenness; it is the hyphen that lies between an I and an It, and an I and a Thou.

In *I and Thou*, Buber offered his initial analysis of these two attitudes. He claimed that the I-Thou relation cannot be sought. "The Thou meets me through grace"—by which he probably meant that we enter into it spontaneously, often when we least expect to. The I-Thou relation is fluid; it is suddenly present, and then gone. "Every Thou in the world is enjoined by its nature to become a thing for us. . . ." Only one Thou never ceases to be a Thou: God. God is never absent; "it is only we who are not always there."

Buber insisted that the Thou cannot be tied down or contained; any attempt to institutionalize it obstructs our relationship to it. In *At The Turning*, he wrote: "The higher, the decisive principle which alone can knit together the relationship to God and the relationship to man—the principle of love—requires neither organizations nor institutions but can be given effect at any time, at any place."

The I-Thou relation is not a trick of the mind; it is real. Maurice Friedman, probably the most perceptive of Buber's followers, comments on this point in his introductory essay to Buber's *The Knowledge of Man*: "In an essential relation with man . . . one life opens to another. . . . The two participate in one another's lives in very fact, not psychically, but ontically." Thus the sense of participation in the very being of the Thou is not a play of the imagination or a psychologically-induced emotion; it occurs in actuality.

Buber apparently regarded the I-Thou as the original, primal attitude of man:

> In the beginning is relation.
>
> Consider the speech of "primitive" peoples . . . whose life is built up within a narrow circle of acts highly charged with presentness. The nuclei of this speech, words in the form of sentences and original pre-grammatical structures . . . mostly indicate the wholeness of a relation. We say "far away"; the Zulu has for that a word which means, in our sentence form, "There where someone cries out: 'O mother, I am lost.' " . . . In this total situation the persons, as expressed both in nouns and pronouns, are embedded. . . . The chief concern is with . . . the true original unity, the lived relation.

It does not, however, follow from this that the I-It attitude is intrinsically harmful or evil; in fact, Buber saw the I-It attitude as a vital tool for the furthering of human progress. "And in all seriousness of truth hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man."

The I-It attitude is one of objective detachment, whereas the I-Thou is one of intense involvement. For the most part, the former is the attitude of the genuine scientist, the latter, that of the great poet, the serious novelist, the true religionist. But no human being is wholly characterized by either of these two attitudes. As Malcolm L. Diamond puts it:

> The two postures are not rigid compartments into which various types of people permanently fit—the scientist into the I-It, the artist into the I-Thou—they are modes of personal existence that appear alternately in all men.

Buber considered Socrates, Jesus, and Goethe to have realized the I-Thou relation most fully: Socrates with man, Jesus with God, and Goethe with nature. In *I and Thou*, Buber wrote:

> But how lovely and how fitting the sound of the lively and impressive *I* of Socrates! It is the *I* of endless dialogue, and the air of dialogue is wafted around it in all its journeys, before the judges and in the last hour in prison. This *I* lived continually in the relation with man which is bodied forth in dialogue. . . .
>
> How lovely and how legitimate the sound of the full *I* of Goethe! It is the *I* of pure intercourse with nature; nature gives herself to it and speaks unceasingly with it, revealing her mysteries to it but not betraying her mystery. . . .
>
> And to anticipate by taking an illustration from the realm of unconditional relation: how powerful, even to being over-powering, and how legitimate, even to being self-evident, is the saying of *I* by Jesus! For it is the *I* of unconditional relation in which the man calls his *Thou* Father in such a way that he himself is simply Son, and nothing else but Son.

The fact that Buber chose Jesus rather than Moses is an indication of the extent to which his early involvement with Christian mysticism remained a dominant factor in his thinking and colored his later understanding of Judaism.

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Buber's concept of the I-It and I-Thou relations is the central element in his thought. Every aspect of his philosophy—religious, ethical, social—is grounded in that concept. In his religious philosophy, Buber rejected completely the rationalist effort to understand and comprehend God. God cannot be expressed; He can only be addressed as a Thou. Following the line of thought developed by Kierkegaard, Buber argued that the mark of man's freedom is his ability to choose and to stake his life on his choice. By risking everything through a decision of faith, man becomes a genuine person; it is in making an ultimate choice for faith that man is most human and most free. Translated into Buber's own terminology, this means that personality is a function of, or is generated out of, the I-Thou relation.

In his ethical philosophy, Buber argued that evil is the constant viewing of a person as an It. Making one's own self the central element of a relationship—an act which renders it impossible to achieve the I-Thou relation—is the root-source of human sin. And in his social philosophy, Buber was a staunch opponent of the collectivist and authoritarian state because it depersonalizes the individual and makes him into an It. "The true community does not arise through people having feelings for one another (though indeed not without it), but through first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Center, and second, their being in living mutual relation with one another."

In Hasidism, Buber felt he had discovered a community which lived the I-Thou relation. He offered a glowing description of this movement in *My Way To Hasidism*:

> Nowhere in the last centuries has the soul-force of Judaism so manifested itself as in Hasidism. . . . Never yet in Europe has such a community thus established the whole of life as a unity on the basis of the inwardly known. Here is no separation between faith and work, between truth and verification, or, in the language of today, between morality and politics; here all is one kingdom, one spirit, one reality.

Buber's understanding of Hasidism, however, is open to a number of objections. This is partly because his interpretation was based almost entirely on legends, biographies, miracle tales, and sayings of the *zaddikim*. Buber virtually ignored a second category of Hasidic writings—the homilies, the commentaries on biblical texts, the works on prayer. In *The Origin and Meaning of Hasdism*, he wrote:

> . . . our chief source of knowledge of Hasidism is its legends, and only after them comes its theoretical literature. The latter is a commentary, the former the text. . . . It is foolish to protest that the legend does not convey to us the reality of Hasidic life. Naturally, the legend is no chronicle, but it is truer than the chronicle for those who know how to read it.

Gershom Scholem* has pointed out the limitations of such an approach. To describe Hasidism on the basis of its legends is equivalent to describing Roman Catholicism by selecting the finest epigrams of the saints of the Church, while at the same time disregarding its dogmatic theology. Buber severed Hasidism from its historical setting and presented it solely as a spiritual phenomenon. More remarkable is the fact that the theoretical literature which Buber rejected was actually the initial creative literature of the Hasidic movement, whereas the legends came into being almost fifty years *after* the beginnings of Hasidism. Buber, then, deliberately chose to ignore the body of literature created during the period in which the movement was at its highest level of vitality and creativity.

Moreover—as Scholem has been at pains to demonstrate—Buber's reading of the texts he did use was in itself problematical. One instance is of special significance for our purposes, since it bears directly on the question we raised at the beginning—the question having to do with the nature of Buber's present audience. Buber made the point that in Hasidism the separation between "life in God" and "life in the world"—to him the primal evil of all "religion"—is overcome in genuine, concrete unity. Scholem takes this to mean that "man's responsibility is infinitely more important than the dogmatic formulation of institutional religion." And he goes on to say that what Buber regarded as the "primal evil of all religion" (that is, institutionalization) is at the very center of Hasidic teaching:

> Buber's so-called "concrete unity" is a fictitious one where Hasidism is concerned, for "life in the world" is no longer life in the world when its divine origins appear in contemplation, thereby transforming it into "life in God." I have still to discover a passage in Hasidic writings that does not maintain the basic separation that Buber so resents. The fact, of course, is—to put it bluntly—that Buber is a religious anarchist . . . and his doctrine is religious anarchism, which does not acknowledge any teaching about *what* should be done but puts the whole emphasis on intensity, on *how* whatever one does is done. Therefore, references to the Torah and the Commandments, which to Hasidism still meant everything, become extremely nebulous in Buber's presentation.

Scholem sums up his evaluation of Buber's interpretation of Hasidism with these words:

> . . . the merits of Buber's presentation of Hasidic sayings and legends are very great indeed and will to a large extent stand the test of time. But the spiritual message he has read into them in

*See his article, "Martin Buber's Hasidism," in the October 1961 Commentary.

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his more mature works is too deeply bound up with assumptions that have no root in the texts —assumptions drawn from his own very modern philosophy of religious anarchism. Too much is left out in his presentation of Hasidism, while what has been included is overloaded with highly personal speculations.

I do not know that Buber made any claims to scholarship in his treatment of Hasidic sources; he was more of a poet than a scholar. But he certainly felt he had uncovered the essence of Hasidism through his interpretation of its legends. And that, as Scholem has shown, is doubtful indeed.

Buber regarded Hasidism as having been, during its period of dynamic creativity, the archetypal manifestation of the essence of prophetic Judaism, and he regarded the teachings of the Prophets as the heart of Judaism. Maintaining as he did that the I-Thou relation cannot be contained and institutionalized, he denied the centrality of Jewish law and placed it on the periphery of his Jewish world-view. In his early writings, he described the prophets, mystics, and some of the *zaddikim* as the bearers of the I-Thou encounter between Judaism and the divine, while priests, kings, and legalists were preoccupied with the It, with the congealing and freezing of the original revelatory encounter. Though he modified this position in his later books, Buber—for all his apparent awareness of the practical importance of the I-It—always retained a marked distaste for structure. That is to say, he saw Jewish law and institutions as having a stifling effect upon the spontaneity that is a necessary condition of the I-Thou encounter.

In Buber's thought, prophetic Judaism, Hasidism, and Zionism are all interrelated. Both prophet and Hasid envision as the goal of Judaism the establishment of an I-Thou community of men on this earth. Modern Zionism, in turn, is the means by which the Jew can realize this prophetic vision in the land to which he is inextricably linked by the Covenant. Buber regarded the kibbutz as a potential I-Thou community, and though he was disillusioned with it later in life, he never abandoned his original hope for it. His position in favor of a bi-national Palestine was more controversial, and caused him to be looked upon with suspicion and resentment by many Israelis. Here, too, Buber longed for the establishment of a dialogical relationship—this time between Jews and Arabs. Reality proved to be stronger than the dream.

It is thus hardly surprising that neo-Orthodox Protestant theologians are among Buber's most ardent admirers, for he shares with these thinkers the characteristic stances of religious existentialism. He denies the ability of unassisted human reason to respond adequately to the dilemmas and ultimate questions that confront man. He sees man as a being who is constantly faced with the need to make decisions. The most crucial decision is the one concerning man's affirmation of God, who can be reached only by total commitment. All of a man's life is staked on this choice, this Pascal-like wager.

Furthermore, Buber shares with many Protestant theologians a distaste for systematic theological concepts, religious institutions, and prescribed patterns of religious behavior. When Buber views religion as a direct relationship between man and God, when he defines sin as the absolutization of the I-It relation, and when he insists that religious laws stultify man's attempts effectively to encounter God, he articulates positions that are perfectly acceptable to Protestants like Niebuhr, Tillich, Heim, and Brunner.

But the very things that make Buber attractive to Protestants render him suspect to Jews. Not that this was always so. In the Europe of the 20's and the 30's, Buber had a large audience among Jews who were somewhat disillusioned with the incessant apologetic attempts to make Judaism rational, and who were seeking a sophisticated ground for their religiosity. They found themselves basically sympathetic to Buber's personality and thought and they were able to appreciate the beauty of his German prose. Many of them were Reform Jews; some were enlightened traditionalists. They became his loyal followers; they constituted Buber's greatest audience—an audience that was to be annihilated by Hitler.

Who is left? Contemporary Jews have responded with something less than enthusiasm to his thought for a variety of reasons. There is, to begin with, Buber's ambivalent attitude toward Jewish law:

> I do not believe that revelation is ever a formulation of laws. It is only through man in his self-contradiction that revelation becomes legislation. . . . I cannot admit the law transformed by man into the realm of my will, if I am to hold myself ready as well for the unmediated word of God directed to a specific hour of life.
>
> It is part of my being that I cannot accept both (the Law and the word of God) together and I cannot imagine that this position will ever change for me. . . .
>
> For me, though man is a law-receiver, God is not a law-giver, and therefore the law has no universal validity for me, but only a personal one. I accept, therefore, only what I think is being spoken to me (e.g., the older I become, and the more I realize the restlessness of my soul, the more I accept for myself the Day of Rest).

As a result of such pronouncements, Buber has been condemned or ignored by Orthodox Jews. And when the Hasidim think of him at all, it is hardly with high regard, for they too feel that he has misunderstood and perverted the teachings of Hasidism by disregarding its commitment to Jewish law. Secular Jews, on the other hand, dislike

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his intense religious orientation. As for Conservative and Reform Jews, those who identify themselves with the rationalist stream of Western culture tend to look upon Buber's religious subjectivism with displeasure, while those who are inclined toward existentialism find they have more in common with Franz Rosenzweig, who took a positive stand on Jewish law. (Some of the younger Reform religious leaders are an exception.)

Buber's view of Jesus has served as a further impediment to his acceptance by Jews. In *Two Types of Faith* he wrote:

> For nearly fifty years the New Testament has been a main concern in my studies, and I think I am a good reader who listens impartially to what is said.
>
> From my youth onwards I have found in Jesus my great brother. That Christianity has regarded him as God the Savior has always appeared to me a fact of highest importance which, for his sake and my own, I must endeavor to understand. . . . My own fraternally open relationship to him has grown ever more stronger and clearer, and today I see him more strongly and clearly than ever before.
>
> I am more certain than ever that a great place belongs to him in Israel's history of faith. . . .

Buber looked upon Jesus as a Servant of the Lord. As spoken of by Deutero-Isaiah, the Servant of the Lord suffers in silence, without knowing his role in the messianic scheme of things. It is his task to wait until such time as God draws him forth to proclaim his messianic nature to the world. Jesus was such a Servant—but with a difference. For instead of waiting, he proclaimed himself the Messiah, and thus became the first of the long and pathetic series of false messiahs. According to Buber, however, this in no way detracts from the intrinsic quality and worth of the personality and teachings of Jesus, who remains a great figure, the greatest figure in the history of Jewish messianism. Whether or not this line of thought is correct is not at issue here. The point is that Buber's attitude toward Jesus was hardly calculated to win him followers among the Jews.

THROUGHOUT human history, the most salient characteristic of man has been his ability to create religious and scientific models of the universe. Each great system of thought represents another model of reality. These models are a testimony to the richness of the human mind and an indication of man's basic need to construct meaningful configurations out of the raw data given to perception. Man had been doing this all along in an unconscious sort of way, believing that these models were objective representations of truth and grounded in immutable scientific or religious laws. In the 19th century, however, man became aware of his model-making activity; he became conscious of the fact that he gives meaning to the world rather than drawing meaning from it. While this insight emphasized man's creativity, it also exposed the arbitrary character of his creations, for it denied the existence of absolute standards, and it stripped the world itself of all essential meaning.

Buber's whole philosophy can be seen as a reaction against modern man's view of the world as a chaos; it is an attempt to see the world as intrinsically suffused with meaning. In I-It encounters, this meaning remains dormant; in I-Thou encounters it enters into the relation and charges it with value. These latter encounters, though elusive and fleeting, are remembered and retain the ability to bring some measure of meaning into later I-It encounters. In essence, this is Buber's religious model of the universe and his legacy to the world. It is a valuable model in that it has much to say concerning the nature of the human experience.

Given Buber's inability to comprehend the nature and meaning of Jewish law, his existentialist orientation, his attitude toward Jesus, and his view of Judaism as refracted through the prism of Christian mysticism, it is perfectly understandable that his work is regarded with suspicion by contemporary Jews. But there is nevertheless a bitter irony in the fact that the great philosopher of dialogue is today virtually incapable of entering into dialogue with his own people.

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THOMAS R. BROOKS

LINDSAY, QUILL & THE TRANSIT STRIKE

On November 3, 1965, the day after New York's mayoralty election, Mayor-elect John V. Lindsay received a telegram, one among many, of "sincere congratulations" from the late Michael J. Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union, AFL-CIO. Along with the telegram, Quill sent a copy of the 76 proposals his union planned to submit to the New York Transit Authority for a new contract covering the roughly 35,000 workers who operate the city's buses and subways. Included among the 76 were demands for a four-day (32-hour) work week, a 30 per cent wage increase, a half-pay pension after twenty-five years of service, and six weeks of vacation after a year on the job. ("We wished to remind him of our very modest requests," Quill said upon release of the telegram to the press.) The mayor-elect was also informed of the union's "long-standing commitment with the membership to live up to our traditional slogan of no contract, no work" on January 1, 1966, and he was invited to name a representative to sit in on the negotiations between the union and the Transit Authority.* The mayor-elect did not reply. The next day the union presented its demands to the Transit Authority. Chairman Joseph O'Grady, declaring himself "flabbergasted," estimated that these demands would cost the Authority $250-million over two years. "There isn't enough gold in Fort Knox to pay this bill," he told reporters.

Thus far, the pattern was in perfect accord with what New Yorkers had come to accept as standard transit repertoire. "The script," as knowing New Yorkers were wont to call the biennial go-around between the TWU and the Transit Authority, with City Hall as a backdrop, was distressingly familiar—so much so that many New Yorkers hoped the new mayor would tear it up, or at least refuse to play his assigned role; some even hoped that Lindsay would call "Quill's bluff" no matter the cost. And indeed, as November wore on with Lindsay still silent, it began to appear that the mayor-elect was writing a new part for himself. On November 18, a little querulous and possibly nervous at the lack of response from the mayor-elect, Quill sent him another telegram. "We need from you less profile, more courage," it read.

Several days later, union leaders and Transit Authority officials met again to act out another traditionally obligatory scene. TA Chairman O'Grady now estimated TWU's demands at $680-million (a figure that stuck) and pronounced them "stratospheric." The union leaders sulked; they left the meeting in silence.

Meanwhile, the old administration in City Hall was preparing to step out of the cast altogether. The Transit Labor Panel, appointed by Mayor Robert F. Wagner in 1963 to assure labor peace on the subways, resigned. All three members—Theodore W. Kheel, George W. Taylor, and David L. Cole—indicated that they wanted nothing to do with the impending transit snarl. And in the background the mayor and the mayor-elect engaged in a kind of pantomime, each trying to suggest that the other was responsible for settling matters.

At the end of November, just before going off for a short vacation in Puerto Rico, Lindsay drew up a list of ten possible mediators for the TA-TWU negotiations. It was the mayor-elect's first mistake, giving the old pro Quill exactly the sort of opening he used to love. For while Lindsay's list included such eminent personages as Dr. Nathan Feinsinger, Archibald Cox, Ewan Clague, Clark Kerr, and James J. Healy, it most conspicuously did not contain the name of anyone remotely familiar with New York City transit and its labor problems. The most noticeable omission from the list was Theodore W. Kheel. The mayor-elect apparently saw in Kheel only a member of the old cabal—Quill, O'Grady, Kheel, and Wagner—which had been fixing behind-the-scenes transit labor deals for over a decade; Kheel's very real ability as a mediator, and his thorough knowledge of the ways of transit labor relations counted, it would seem, for little in Lindsay's eyes. But whatever the reason, the word from Lindsay's quarter was: "No deals, no Kheel."

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* The Transit Authority is an "autonomous operating agency" established by the State Legislature under the Public Authorities Act. The City of New York owns the property—rolling stock, tracks, barns, and so on—and leases it to the Authority on a long-term basis. Of the three men who run the Authority, one is appointed by the Governor and one by the mayor. The two appointees designate the third member who, under the law, must be chairman.

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Somebody should have reminded the mayor-elect that Mike Quill once spent an entire year getting rid of an impartial arbitrator named by the Republicans so that the position could be secured for Kheel. I do not mean to imply in any way that Kheel ever weighted his decisions in favor of the union as a result of this favor. But it is a simple fact of New York politics and of the history of transit labor relations that both sides had come to place a great deal of trust in him. Kheel was the broker who arranged trades under which the union got security and the Authority got greater efficiency and labor stability. In any event, when two parties to a conflict believe that one man above all others would be useful in working out a solution, it behooves the third party to the conflict to give some thought either to changing their minds, whether by force or by reason, or to acquiesce. Lindsay did neither.

NOVEMBER ended with Lindsay and Quill trading verbal blows. Lindsay declared his willingness to meet with Quill, but said, "Mr. Quill hasn't even taken the trouble to call me. He's not doing his people any good with his pyrotechnics on television. I'll meet him around the clock—on the subways, anywhere." The mayor-elect then went on to spell out his strategy, or at least what he thought his role ought to be: "In a problem like this," he said, "I think it's the role of the mayor-elect to act as a catalyst on this, urging both sides to get down to the issues as soon as possible." He then charged Quill with not bargaining in good faith. "He wouldn't be in a position to know," Quill shot back, "because he hasn't attended any of our sessions."

"There is absolutely no progress in the talks," Quill announced at the beginning of December. He then invited Lindsay to meet him "at whatever time and place you designate." Asked if he would meet with Quill, Lindsay replied, "There must be some demonstration that he intends to bargain in good faith." It was at this point that the list of ten proposed mediators was released to the press. If the mayor-elect thought he was pressing Quill and the union into the collective-bargaining lists, he could not have been more mistaken. What he was actually doing was giving Quill what the union leader most wanted—an excuse to break off talks and apply pressure on Mayor Wagner. Perhaps Wagner could make Lindsay see the point: the absolute need for at least one man "who understood transit" on any mediation panel invited to sit in on the dispute.

When Lindsay repeated his plea for a "demonstration in good faith" in bargaining, Quill chose to take this as an affront to his honor: "Nothing goes on until he [Lindsay] withdraws his statement." Quill followed up this threat of a stall with the announcement that the union would strike on December 15, "just in time for the Christmas shopping rush." Without batting a blue eye, Quill denied bluffing and denied that the move was calculated to pressure Lindsay into naming Kheel as a mediator. "Lindsley," as he insisted on calling the mayor-elect, was "an ungracious sourpuss. Let him run the trains and buses. . . ." Quill dared the TA to seek an injunction and threatened to go on a hunger strike if arrested.

If Quill and Lindsay had really wanted to meet, of course, they could have found a way; instead they obligingly threw obstacles in each other's paths. Meanwhile Wagner, who knew a cliffhanger when he saw one, began to get a little worried: he wasn't about to have a December 15 strike on *his* hands, and he approached Kheel behind the scenes to ask if he would serve on a mediation panel. Kheel said he would do so only if invited by *both* Wagner and Lindsay.

At the end of the week, Quill called off the December 15 walkout. His announcement followed the naming of a three-man mediation panel consisting of Nathan Feinsinger (professor of law at the University of Wisconsin and permanent arbitrator for General Motors and the United Auto Workers), Sylvester Garrett (permanent arbitrator for U.S. Steel and the United Steelworkers), and . . . Theodore Kheel, permanent arbitrator for New York City Transit. Quill, who now magnanimously averred that he was not "wedded to Kheel," had outfoxed "Lindsley."

THE NEXT two weeks were given over to assorted maneuverings. Lindsay conferred with the mediators for ninety minutes, and Dr. Feinsinger was chosen as chairman of the panel. "Our aim," he told newsmen, "is to get a mediated settlement as soon as possible and to avoid another cliffhanger." The mediators began a series of meetings, clearly exploratory, hoping for a break somewhere. Mayor Wagner, continuing to extricate himself from the proceedings, requested state aid, a plea rejected by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, who said that transit was "a city problem." John J. Gilhooley, the Republican member of the Transit Authority, charged that Wagner was "playing politics with the [15-cent] fare"—something, of course, no Republican would do. Quill, always happy to supply a reason for the lack of progress, charged that "outside meddlers, meeting secretly, have been slowing down negotiations." The union negotiators introduced economist Leon Keyserling as their consultant. His economic analysis in support of the union position, and his suggestion that the city make proper use of its tax resources, were ignored by everybody. A few days before Christmas, Mayor Wagner entered the talks for the last time. He said a strike would be "intolerable" and urged "a speed-up of negotiations." He, too, was ignored by everybody. On Christmas eve, Quill dispatched a special holiday greeting to the public: "We wish the people a Merry Christmas, but we're very sorry we can't wish them a happy New Year."

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On Monday, December 27, Lindsay met separately with the mediators (thirty minutes), the Transit Authority (one hour), and the union (twenty minutes). In his first direct participation in the dispute, Lindsay told the parties there must be no strike and asked for a "fair, reasonable, and equitable settlement." The next day the Transit Authority announced plans for a no-strike injunction against the union. Quill reiterated his willingness and that of his associates to go to jail. On the next-to-the-last day before the strike, the union negotiators walked out on their talks with the TA, vowing they would not return until Lindsay came in on a continuing basis. In response, the Transit Authority began a "sit-in" to dramatize its willingness to negotiate.

But the Authority's gesture, in truth, was an empty one. As John O'Donnell, the TWU attorney, observed after the strike: "Never in O'Grady's history did he ever give out one dollar unless he was certain the TA could meet it out of revenues, or offset it from another source, namely City Hall." Earlier in December, O'Grady had announced to all who wanted to listen, and particularly for the benefit of the mayor-elect, "With our present financial position, we face the necessity of either a fare raise or getting money from governmental sources to avoid one." By law, the Transit Authority must meet operating expenses out of operating revenues; only capital costs may be subsidized by the city. Riding on each fare, according to TA estimates, is a two-cent deficit. The overall deficit for the current fiscal year is expected to exceed $60-million. Governor Rockefeller had already refused to advance the city money to save the 15-cent fare, even though, facing an election next fall, he is reportedly anxious to hold the fare to fifteen cents. The TA, faced with a wage increase, possessed only one source of revenue within its own power—the price of a token. As O'Donnell told me, "If you think a Democratic controlled Transit Authority is going to relieve a Republican mayor-elect of the responsibility of a fare increase by raising it themselves, you're crazy." So long as the mayor-elect chose to keep silent on the question of finances—and up until December 31 he made no mention to either the mediators or the Transit Authority of financial assistance—the TA had no option but to remain silent itself.

On the morning of the 31st, Mayor Robert F. Wagner left for an Acapulco vacation with his wife and two sons. At Kennedy Airport, he told reporters, "This is Mayor-elect Lindsay's show now. I'm just a tourist." By that Friday afternoon Lindsay apparently realized that if he wanted action at the bargaining table before the subways and buses stopped rolling, he would have to indicate to the Authority that some money would be available. When he did so is not exactly clear, for the day's events remain hectic and uncertain, even in the minds of direct participants. Lindsay spent part of the afternoon at a joint meeting of the mediators, the Authority, and the union leaders. Quill, by all accounts, was especially vituperative, caustic, and needling. "He wanted Lindsay to walk out of that meeting," I was told by someone who was present, "but I must say Lindsay handled himself well." Quill called Lindsay a "pipsqueak" and a "juvenile," hurled an obscene Yiddish epithet at him (brogue and all), shouting that he "wouldn't take *bubkes*" from anyone like Lindsay.* According to some accounts, Lindsay was "seething but restrained," contenting himself with the remark: "Well, Mike, I hope you will be more respectful of my office when I become mayor." When Lindsay indicated he had to return to City Hall for his swearing-in as mayor, Quill told him, "You can get any kind of a judge to come up here and swear you in. There's enough people here to swear in anybody."

At City Hall, some forty relatives and friends and about thirty reporters attended the 6:00 P.M. swearing-in of the new mayor. Pale, disturbed, and solemn, Lindsay said, "Ours is a proud city. It should be a proud city and that is why I look forward with pride to being its mayor." Lindsay then borrowed fifteen cents from a reporter to make the traditional payment to the city on the signing of the Book of Office. He made no mention of the transit crisis. At 6:56, he left for the Americana Hotel, where the transit meetings were being held, arriving at 7:15. At 7:45, Justice George Tilzer—declaring that "If the fear of God was as great as that of Quill and his union, we would have a better world"—issued an injunction against the TWU.

SOME TIME on Friday afternoon Lindsay had assured the Transit Authority that some money —$7-million was the figure later leaked to the *Times*—would be made available to help the TA out of its financial bind. The Authority then worked up a $25-million package, including a 3.2 per cent wage increase for each year of a two-year contract. The offer was built on the Presidential guidelines for non-inflationary wage settlements based on an average yearly increase in national productivity of 3.2 per cent. It was considerably below the $38.6-million settlement of 1963. The $25-million offer was given to the mediators at eight o'clock, New Year's eve.

Two hours later, in the presence of the mediators and the mayor, O'Grady announced to the union negotiating team that the Authority had given the mediators a "fair, equitable, and substantial offer," but that he would not present it to the union until the TWU reduced its demands. The union team caucused for ten minutes. Quill asked for a dollar evaluation of the offer. O'Grady

* At a post-strike press conference, Quill stated, "I think Mayor Lindsay did everything he could, once he knew how serious it [the dispute] was. My previous statements about him were made in the heat of battle—under war conditions." Taken together, the vituperation and the apology were quintessential Quill.

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replied, "We won't tell you until you reduce your demands." "This sounds like What's My Line," Quill snapped back. "We won't play a hiding game."

Lindsay then instructed O'Grady to state the offer, and much against his wishes, O'Grady did so. There was a loud hoot of laughter from among the members of the union negotiating committee. Quill waited until it died down, and then said: "You made an offer. I don't reject it, but I will suggest that my committee turn it down. We will discuss it and give you an answer at ten o'clock in the morning." Quill rose to go. Someone said, "Wait a minute, Mike. Do you mean you've postponed the strike?" Quill looked owlishly at the speaker: "Oh, no. The strike is on."

Shortly after midnight Quill told reporters that he was going to bed and the TV audience that the strike was on. When somebody handed him a paper he said, "If this is the injunction, I might as well go all the way," and tore the paper up. He denounced the TA offer as "Operation peanuts." At 5:00 A.M., Saturday morning, the transit system began to shut down; it took three hours and two minutes for the last train, the IRT Seventh Avenue express, to roll into the 241st Street station. Later that morning, inaugural ceremonies for the 103rd mayor of New York were held on the City Hall steps beneath a coffin-gray sky, before a crowd of 2,500 people. Lindsay, in his inaugural address, blasted the walkout as "an unlawful strike against the public interest . . . an act of defiance against eight million people."

What Lindsay had on his mind that dreary Saturday is anyone's guess. The union people I have talked with all believe, to quote one of them, that "Lindsay was convinced that Quill and Wagner, between them, had built up wages and working conditions to a level that could not be justified." Most of them also believe that Lindsay thought the strike would evaporate over the weekend. An unnamed Lindsay aide was quoted as expecting a one-day strike ("Let them flex their muscles a little," he reportedly advised the mayor). Feinsinger also, as he told an interviewer several days later, thought ". . . that if a strike were called at all, it would end after the first two days, which would be before the first full working day." What those who held such views were saying was that the strike had been called by Quill to embarrass the new mayor. Quill's obvious zest for political needling gave credence to this interpretation. What it overlooked, of course, was the economic interest of Transit Authority employees, of whom there were some 32,600 in TWU and another 1,800 (mostly in Staten Island and part of Queens) in the Amalgamated Transit Union; about 3,000 employees of the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority were also involved. Once they were out, it would take more than the $25-million offered by the Authority to get them back.

Quill's blustering style colored and indeed overwhelmed everything, even the case that could be made for the economic demands of the union. Later in the negotiations, Douglas MacMahon, who replaced Quill as the chief negotiator, effected a kind of modest rescue by stressing the "inequities" between what transit workers and other city employees earn for the same work. At the time of the strike, "bus maintainers" (The TA euphemism for mechanics) were earning $3.46 an hour, as compared with $4.80 for auto mechanics working for the police, fire, and other city departments. The Transit Authority motorman was being paid $3.46 an hour; the same job on the Hudson Tubes pays $3.95. "A maintenance electrician for the New York *Times* and the *Daily News*, handling 220 volts," Quill once pointed out, "gets $4.07 an hour, and a 37½-hour week, with four weeks vacation after one year, while a Transit Authority electrician, handling 21,000 volts, gets only $3.46 an hour."

BUT EVEN these "inequities" do not tell the full tale. The "modest but adequate" budget of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics calls for $6,900 in annual earnings for a family of four living in New York City, and $7,900 a year for a family of five, assuming the children are under 13; when children are older, the budget calls for another $1,000. Now the average basic annual earnings before taxes of all hourly-rated Transit Authority employees for fiscal 1965 was $6,299 or about 8 per cent below the "modest" budget. That was the average. But railroad clerks, car cleaners, porters, and platform men—who comprise roughly 32 per cent of the TA workforce—averaged $5,500 a year, well below the budget. Bus operators—17.6 per cent of the workforce—averaged $6,071 a year, not a munificent sum for skilled work. As one bus driver told me, "Look, I drive a 20-ton vehicle for $129 a week after seven years. Most men who are driving a one-ton or a one-and-a-half-ton truck get more than that. And I carry people, not boxes." Similarly, Michael Evans, an IRT conductor, told me, "I have four dependents and I take home a net pay of $90 a week. That's not much for the type of job I do. . . . We make less than sanitation men" (whose top pay is $3.59 an hour).

As Sidney Margolius, a consumer consultant for a number of unions, points out, if the average subway worker has a really large family (and many do), "he is pretty close to the poverty level as recently defined by the federal government." Moreover, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "modest but adequate" budget might more accurately be described as "shabby and respectable." It allows the husband a coat every five years, a bottle of beer every other day, a new hat for the wife once every two years, two movies a month, and less than one egg a day per person. To be sure, a great many people in New York City are much worse off than the transit workers. But the latter are organized,

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they do steady work, they perform an essential function, and they are civil servants. By those standards, they ought to be among the best paid workers in the city. If they had been, there would have been no strike.

But there were other pressures on Quill besides those flowing from the economic plight of the TWU membership. Quill, for all his bluster, was anything but an "irresponsible" trade-union leader. An Irish revolutionary from County Kerry, his public style reflected the fact that the TWU was originally made up, as he once put it to me, of "a lot of young Irishmen who came over from secret organizations [and who] liked the secrecy and intrigue" [of building the union]. Flashing a smile, he added, "I liked it then. I like it still. It never left me." There was always a tension between the Quill who would have loved to preach the socialism of James Connally, and the Quill who was the leader of anti-socialist Irish Catholic bus drivers and subway motormen. He resolved that tension, in part, and not entirely successfully, by playing the clown, the Finn MacCuhal of the city subways —like that Irish folk hero, crafty and brave as well as vindictive and generous. In that role Quill often angered his fellow New Yorkers and at times cajoled them, but he never failed to entertain them, even at the end.

But if Quill's style made him look "irresponsible," his actual record as a union leader most emphatically did not. Thus, over ten years ago, he recognized that to secure some improvements he would have to trade off "savings" to the Authority. For example, TWU accepted a change in the sick-leave plan that eliminated payment for one-day illnesses. This meant a considerable saving for the Authority; in return the union secured an extension in the total number of sick-leave days allowed. At about the same time, the Authority also instituted a speed-up with the union going along in exchange for a guarantee that no man would be laid off because of automation; as a result, some 8,000 jobs have been eliminated through attrition over roughly the last ten years. Both moves, however, were initially very unpopular and the dissatisfaction culminated in December 1957 in an eight-day wildcat strike led by the motormen. For once in his stormy career, Quill was nonplussed; he joined with the Authority to break the strike. In the representation election that followed the wildcat, the Transport Workers Union barely squeaked out recognition. Such memories die hard, and it has taken the union a good part of the succeeding years to win back its members. Obviously, the union leadership could not settle for a "deal"—not once the strike had begun.

Lindsay, however, had much to learn about the pressures on Quill and his colleagues in the union leadership. On New Year's Day, the New York *Times* thundered editorially: "The immediate need is for a demonstration by Mr. Lindsay that the city will not capitulate to such tyranny by granting wage increases and other concessions beyond those justified by economic reality. The recommendations of the three expert mediators . . . represent the only dependable guidelines to a fair settlement. Anything more would be appeasement." The mediators, of course, knew by then what the *Times* did not mention: that what was holding up any possibility of a settlement was the absence of any commitment on money in any significant amount from Lindsay.

THE *Times*, along with most papers in the city, also called for enforcement of the Condon-Wadlin act. This 19-year-old law, more honored in the breach than the observance, forbids public employees to strike, and imposes stiff penalties on violators. Strikers must return to their jobs with loss of seniority and cannot receive any wage increase for three years. The city could not have enforced the law fully without making up its mind to break the union—and this it did not want to do. Nonetheless, acting under the law, the Transit Authority did secure an injunction barring the strike. (This move was all but mandatory. It also exerted pressure of a kind upon the union to settle, or so some people believed.) Over the weekend, Quill and the other leaders of the union were served with a court order, returnable on Monday at 2:00 P.M., requiring them to show cause as to why they should not be punished for ignoring the injunction. As it turned out, this was the only move of any consequence during the first weekend of the strike.

Monday was the first real day of the strike for most New Yorkers. Many, in response to Mayor Lindsay's appeal that only "essential" employees report to work, remained at home. (The mayor's urging that employers pay people who did so may have been taken as a guarantee by some; employer generosity, however, generally did not extend beyond the first day or so of the strike.) The Commerce and Industry Association estimated that Monday morning traffic was 23 per cent below normal and that only 800,000 of the 7.2-million people who normally enter the central business district each day showed up for work. The mayor set the tone for response to the strike by hiking four miles from his temporary quarters uptown to City Hall, leaving at 5:57 A.M. and arriving at 6:47 A.M. The walk, he said, was "good for the circulation." Bicycle rental shops did a rush business. A 47-year-old Wall Street executive arrived at Grand Central Station carrying his daughter's dismantled bicycle. After assembling it, he pedalled to his office in 17 minutes. A 33-year-old maintenance worker from Astoria, wearing a black raincoat and a green beret, rollerskated from the Queensboro Bridge to his job at the Olin-Mathieson building in mid-Manhattan. Though traffic did move smoothly enough the first morning, it was at a slow crawl for the rest of the strike as New Yorkers doubled-up for rides, walked, or hitchhiked to

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work. Back at the Americana Hotel, around tables covered with green felt, men doodled—a skull and crossbones, a neatly lined ice cream cone, a fat X.

Tuesday opened with the announcement, heard by many over car radios as they inched their way into the center of the city, that Quill and the others had been found guilty of civil contempt and had been ordered to be imprisoned until such time as they called off the strike. Quill rose to the occasion as if the whole city had become the stage of the Abbey Theater. "We will continue in mediation until we are dragged from our seats," he declared. "Then we will throw in our second line of leadership. The courts may have their finest hour, but they'll not break us one penny from our objectives."

Shortly after eleven that morning, Quill arrived before the TV cameras for his confrontation with the city marshal. He was bundled up in a dark overcoat, his blackthorn stick hooked over a shaky arm; with bloodless lips and drawn face, he declared his defiance: "The judge can drop dead in his black robes. . . . I don't care if I rot in jail, I will not call off the strike." Hotel tables broke under the weight of the scrambling cameramen. The marshal arrived, delayed by traffic, and Quill —along with eight other union leaders—went off to jail after being nearly crushed to death by the crowd. An irate lady spat at the car that carried him away. Once alone in the prison front office, Quill collapsed from exhaustion, incorrect use of the medication that had been prescribed for his physical condition, and heart congestion. On January 28, 1966, fifteen days after the end of the strike, he died of heart failure in his sleep.

THE WISDOM of jailing Quill has been much debated. There are those who think he ought to have been jailed earlier, and others who have taken the view that it is impossible to negotiate with a man in jail. Actually, though the jailing had rather complex effects, in the end it probably strengthened the union. The most immediate benefit was to rally organized labor—which had been very uncertain in its response to the strike—behind the TWU: New York, organized labor felt, must not become an injunction city. (The Liberal party unions—the ILGWU, and the Hat, Cap & Millinery Workers, were, of course, in the Lindsay camp.) Still, the support of labor officialdom did not necessarily reflect rank-and-file sentiment, and the involvement of the Central Labor Council ultimately complicated matters for the TWU. Harry Van Arsdale, the energetic CLC head, immediately set to work trying to free the strike leaders (all but Quill, who was then hospitalized). This did not especially please the TWU's second-line leadership, which told Van Arsdale in a stormy meeting that the slogan was "Lift the injunction," not "Free our leaders."

Given Quill's health, it is unlikely that he could have lasted out the negotiations had he been free to do so. Had he not been jailed and had he then been taken ill, there might have been a scramble among the remaining TWU leaders for the honor of settling the strike. As it was, the mission devolved upon Douglas MacMahon, Quill's very able lieutenant.

MacMahon had no sooner sat down at the bargaining table across from O'Grady than the Lindsay camp decided to revert to the old script. The new way of doing things—"collective bargaining" rather than "deals"—clearly was getting nowhere; perhaps it was time to open a few backdoors. On Thursday, Deputy Mayor Robert Price met secretly with Quill at his hospital bedside. Both denied making a deal, but one cannot help thinking of Quill's expertise at misdirection and Price's inexperience in labor negotiations. In any event, after this meeting Mayor Lindsay rejoined the negotiations at the Americana; suddenly the newspapers "glimpsed hope" and there was talk of a $40-million package in the making.

Lindsay now began maneuvering in earnest for money. He appealed to President Johnson for federal aid. The President responded by sending not money, but Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz, who was given a fast whirl around town before returning to Washington. But (as now seems clear) by the second weekend, Lindsay had the money he wanted. It was promised by Rockefeller, amounted to about $100-million, and was an advance on monies due the city under various tax arrangements. This "stop-gap" aid was aimed at maintaining the 15-cent fare until the merger of the deficit-ridden Transit Authority with the profitable Triborough Bridge Authority could be arranged (or, as cynics would have it, until after the 1966 elections). With the money still, as it were, hidden in his back pocket, Lindsay could feel a certain confidence when he announced that the two sides were trying for a settlement by Monday morning. Sunday afternoon, Lindsay summoned everyone to City Hall where sessions began at 5:00 o'clock. The old script, calling for a cliff-hanging wrap-up at City Hall, had at last been dusted off.

Bargaining, MacMahon told me after the strike ended, "didn't start until we went to City Hall. There we began to get some give and take. The Transit Authority stopped at a point, said there's no money. Then Lindsay stepped in, just as the mayor did in the past." As the night wore on, a $50-million package took shape on the bargaining table. The Transit Authority offered a million dollars in 1966 and a million in 1967 to improve working conditions, provide all required uniforms, cover the benefits of a so-called "death gamble" pension provision (the making up of losses suffered by a widow whose husband did not retire when eligible), and it offered a 10 per cent wage increase. The wage offer was rejected, and then, apparently much to the surprise of both the union and the Transit Authority, Price tossed on

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the table a $500-a-year supplementary pension benefit. This was quickly snapped up by the union while the Authority boggled. ("That $500 benefit alone is going to cause Lindsay a lot of trouble when he comes to bargain with other city employees," a union negotiator told me.) Lindsay then came up with a 15 per cent wage offer that would achieve a $4 hourly wage by July 1, 1967 for top-rated job classifications. "That," MacMahon told me, "was bargaining."

NEVERTHELESS, at 6:15 in the morning, a haggard mayor faced reporters to announce, "We have recessed . . . until sometime after noon." What had happened? The best explanation may be that the union negotiators, smelling victory, thought they could fatten the package a bit more. The union also had a noontime rally planned for the next day and perhaps believed that a demonstration of old-fashioned solidarity would help. (To have a strike without some such event would run counter to tradition.) In addition, the union was probably not unmindful of the political benefit that would accrue to Mayor Lindsay if he were able to announce a settlement from City Hall. After all, it was *their* script he had tried to ignore, and now that he had finally fallen into the part assigned to him, why should he reap star billing? Aside from all this, the union was unhappy with Lindsay's formula for the distribution of the 15 per cent increase (2 per cent January 1, 1966; 2 per cent June 30, 1966; 2 per cent January 1, 1967; and 9 per cent July 1, 1967)—the union wanted more up front and much less toward the end. It also wanted the $2-million in working conditions all in the first year.

Though MacMahon was privately optimistic, he remained a firebrand in public. On Monday he told some 10,000 union members, "I've never met such amateurs in all my life. I tell you it was a sad day when Bob Wagner left this town. This guy [Lindsay] doesn't know what the hell he is doing." Lindsay was furious. "The government of this city," he responded, "will not capitulate before the lawless demands of a single power group. It will not allow the power-brokers in our city, or any special interests, to dictate to this city the terms under which it will exist in New York."

The next two days (Tuesday and Wednesday) were spent with both sides giving consideration to proposals from the mediators. Behind the scenes, mediators sought agreement from the union on a new formula and urged them to accept the "million-million" working conditions offered by the Authority instead of insisting on bunching up $2-million in one year. On Wednesday, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York, flew in from Washington for an afternoon meeting with Lindsay. He called the strike "intolerable" and "catastrophic," and at a joint press conference with the mayor urged "the union as well as the Authority to accept the findings of the mediation board. There's going to have to be give-and-take on both sides. That give-and-take must take place today. The strike really cannot go on for another day."

The Kennedy timing, as usual, was remarkable. That night the parties and the mediators got down to the business of wrapping up the settlement package and tying up loose ends. The panel came up with an acceptable formula—4 per cent on January 1, 1966; 4 per cent on January 1, 1967; and 7 per cent July 1, 1967, which established a top rate as of that date of $4 an hour. The union also accepted the "million-million."* At 1:35 A.M. Thursday morning, January 13, MacMahon announced that the union negotiators had agreed to the mediators' formula and would recommend that the union executive board approve it. The Authority announced its acceptance two hours later, and at 6:25 A.M., MacMahon made it official. Within minutes, subways and buses began to roll. Quill and his fellow prisoners were released later in the day.

THE COST of the settlement has been variously estimated at anywhere from $43.4-million to $70-million over two years. If past experience is any guide, we can expect the settlement to cost out on the lower side. In 1959, for example, the settlement was priced at $35-million but actually cost $9-million; in 1963, it was priced at $36-million but actually cost $24.1-million; and in 1963 it was priced at $38.6-million but actually cost $33.8-million.† The Transit Authority estimates that it lost some $15-million as a result of the strike; the Commerce and Industry Association came up with a total loss to the city's businesses of $1-billion (probably an inflated figure). The real losses, in a sense, were sustained by small businesses and by those cleaning women, maids, and other workers who could not get to work and could not collect unemployment benefits. How much that came to, no one really knows, at least not yet.

What, then, is one to make of the strike? President Johnson clearly does not think much of it, or of the settlement. Administration economists estimated the cost of the settlement as averaging out at 4.5 to 4.6 per cent a year, well in excess of the Presidential guidelines for non-inflationary settlements (3.2 per cent). While

* The money is to be used for improving working conditions, e.g., adjusting subway and bus runs, and providing an extra holiday or some other benefit. Those details are to be worked out in further negotiations between the union and TA management.

†The difference is explained by some natural puffery. For example, the union estimates the cost of the "death gamble" benefit at $7-9-million, treating it as funded insurance. But in fact the TA will pay the benefit on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, which may keep costs down to as low as $2-million. The difference in past years also reflected the trimming of labor costs, cutting down of overtime, increased labor efficiency, and the like.

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Lindsay and the city were still groggy, the President lashed out, denouncing the settlement as inflationary. Secretary of Labor Wirtz immediately backed him up, saying that the settlement "was unquestionably outside the stabilization anti-inflation policies." Possibly the President was piqued at the fast shuffle given his envoy to the negotiations the previous week. But the President was also acting in response to certain practical considerations. The Council of Economic Advisors—and the President—have been under considerable pressure to revise the guidelines upward. The President, in effect, was saying that he wasn't about to do so (and he hasn't), and at the same time he was warning labor not to take the New York settlement as a go-ahead for other wage-demand programs. Actually, as Feinsinger was quick to point out, the guidelines do allow for additional adjustments to be made for "inequities or injustices." "All the money items involved in the proposed agreement," Feinsinger wrote in an analysis made before the final settlement, "are clearly within the confines of the "guidelines."

WHATEVER the President's reasons for denouncing the transit settlement, it is not going to set a pattern for bargaining throughout the nation. It is, however, already giving rise to a host of legislative proposals to govern labor relations for public employees. The President himself has indicated that he will ask for legislation to "enable us effectively to deal with strikes which threaten irreparable damage to the national interest," and New York State legislators are considering various bills aimed at "seeing that it doesn't happen again." Two Lindsay Republicans in Albany, for example, so far without the backing of the mayor himself, have introduced a bill that would subject any striking public employee to one year in jail and a $1,000 fine, while also imposing a fine of $200,000 a day against the striking union and $10,000 a day against union leaders. When one considers what the practical effect of such a law would have been, if implemented against TWU and its members in the last strike, one can only hope that the bill dies—and soon. As Condon-Wadlin so amply demonstrates, legislation banning strikes, even with stiff penalties, is useless. Mayor Lindsay did not need legislation to settle the strike. His problem, simply put, was that he could not bring himself to trust either TA chairman O'Grady or mediator Kheel enough to tell them that money was available, and that they could go ahead and settle. Kheel, who perhaps more than any other single individual brought about the settlement, wisely has warned: "No one should be misled in the belief that there is a single, all-pervasive solution to strikes. There is no panacea."

Some form of labor legislation governing public employees may be politically inescapable, and a law that encourages voluntary methods for reaching an agreement would be the best of all possible legislation. Mediation can be encouraged, and fact-finding, in some instances, has much to recommend it. If there had been fact-finding in the recent transit conflict, for example, the workers' real case for wage increases and their grievances might have had the airing they did not receive. (In part, this was the fault of newspaper and television coverage which concentrated on the colorful to the exclusion of the pertinent.) But fact-finding has disadvantages: it delays a settlement, and it may underscore the financial woes of public agencies in such a way as to reinforce their refusal to concede to their employees' demands. The threat of a strike, or an actual strike, forces the agency to find money, a course it might otherwise evade successfully. Whatever pressures may be applied through the law should be on the parties to negotiate. They should not be encouraged to postpone the inevitable, which is the chief result of extended cooling-off periods and emergency hearing boards. Nor should they be encouraged to pass the buck, which is the chief weakness of arbitration. Arbitration is also ineffective as a strike deterrent: instead of official strikes, one gets wildcats (at least this has been the experience in New Zealand, where some form of compulsory arbitration has existed for nearly half a century). All in all, the trouble with putting the techniques for resolving labor disputes into the law is that the machinery becomes so inflexible and predictable that it discourages voluntary settlements.

If legislators must legislate, the best thing they could do is repeal the Condon-Wadlin act: a law that can be flouted with such ease is a bad law. But what is really wrong with legislating ways of averting strikes is that it by-passes the real problem (and the one underlying the transit strike in particular)—the financing of decent public services. The fare could be raised, but that, like the sales tax, would place the burden most heavily on those who can least afford it. In principle, there is no real reason why the subways and buses should not be treated as a free service, as the schools, and the police and fire departments, already are. Of course this would require a substantial revision of our present tax structure, and is therefore unlikely to come about. But that does not mean that the only answer is to raise the fare. As Mayor Lindsay points out, "I see no reason why the subway system should have to be on a self-sustaining basis. . . . I believe myself that the revenues from a reorganized transportation system ought to be free to be used for any part of that system by a new authority." To that end, Lindsay has introduced legislation to reorganize the Triborough Bridge Authority and the Transit Authority into a single agency. The profits of one would then subsidize the other. This is the beginning of wisdom, a lesson learned from the strike. But it is only a beginning, for the New York transit strike was but one symptom of the general malaise afflicting all our cities.

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JAMES GROSSMAN

A NOTE ON FELIX FRANKFURTER

FELIX FRANKFURTER, in 1894 at the age of twelve, was brought from Vienna to an America in the midst of a great depression. He watched the people of New York hiss the President of the United States at a ceremonial occasion, the dedication of Grant's Tomb. At his first school his teacher believed in corporal punishment. His father did not prosper. And yet apparently to the young boy this was—as it was to be for the man through his long life—the Promised Land. Just as his teacher was one of his greatest benefactors—she taught him English by threatening the other boys with "gentle uppercuts" if they spoke to him in German—everything that happened to him was always for the best. His best piece of luck, he seems to have believed, was the series of accidents that kept him out of Columbia Law School and caused him to go to Harvard. While on his way to Morningside Heights to matriculate, he was induced by a friend to go to Coney Island for the day; later, when he was ill he was advised not to go to a city law school and chose Harvard because he thought Cambridge was in the country.

His career as a student in Harvard Law School has something of the legendary quality of Brandeis's there. He was first in his class each year. For some time after he graduated, and before he was famous, Professor Smith read to the class in torts a brilliant passage from Frankfurter's first-year examination. The letters of recommendation that the Dean, who was given to understatement, wrote for him were so glowing that one lawyer was surprised on studying the signature to see that it was genuine.

Frankfurter obtained a job in one of the best law firms in New York; it was an office that he wanted to be in not only because of its excellence but also because he had heard that "they had never taken a Jew and wouldn't take a Jew." A friendly junior partner suggested that this was a good time to change his name: " . . . there's nothing the matter with it, but it's odd, fun-making." He refused, as Jews often have, to give up a name that must have been in the family for only a relatively short period of time. His refusal did not hurt his prospects, for when he left to join the staff of the new United States Attorney, Henry L. Stimson, he was told that he could come back if he wanted to.

He never returned to private practice in an office or to the chance of making a fortune. His only problem in giving up his job had been whether he was being fair to his employers in not staying with them longer. Characteristically, it was a solace to him that with public service went a reduction in pay, from $1,000 to $750 a year. He seems always to have felt that there was something wrong in being well paid for doing what one likes to do and was never paid for his advocacy in the causes he served in private life. At law school the great John Chipman Gray had asked him, "How would you like to work a month with me on . . . my casebook on Property?" To Frankfurter, as he has told us, this was, "How would you like to enter the Elysian Fields?" and when Gray sent him a check for $100 for his work Frankfurter returned it twice until finally a note came, "Dear Frankfurter, Don't be a damn fool. Yours Cordially, John C. Gray." Years later, Frankfurter would say to his wife when she brushed aside compliments on her beauty, "Marion, you must learn to face the truth even when it's pleasant." One feels that Frankfurter himself could never quite see that in refusing money there was possibly something pleasant that he was refusing to face.

The young Frankfurter was in government service for almost eight years, first in the United States Attorney's office in New York and then in Washington when Stimson became Secretary of War under President Taft. The War Department was probably one of the most interesting branches of the government to work in. It was in effect the

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colonial office and the ministry of public works, and Frankfurter's faith in government as an instrument of public welfare may have come not only from books but in part from his experience in a conservative Republican administration. Frankfurter was so successful in his work that Taft kept him on although he supported Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, and when Wilson became President he stayed on under the new administration.

His GREATEST success was social. His friendships ranged from the young Lord Eustace Percy, the seventh son of the seventh Duke of Northumberland, to the aging Justice Holmes. He was one of the first of the great judge's young Jewish friends who made him happy in his last years by celebrating his greatness on every occasion. Frankfurter met everyone, a practice he continued through his entire life. He seems early to have hit on the rule of life that he formulated for Ella Winter at the Peace Conference: ". . . use every chance to make personal contacts. They are what count in life. You never know when one may become important." Put bluntly, this sounds embarrassing, the calculating advice of a Babbitt. But it is the calculation of a man who really enjoyed meeting people, as perhaps Babbitt did also. His open joy in meeting and knowing the great of this world was probably the source of what Holmes amusedly called his "unimaginable gift of wiggling in wherever he wants to." It was not a weakness, but, as with Proust, his strength.

In 1914 he joined the faculty of Harvard Law School. He was as surprised at being asked as if he had an invitation from an East Indian princess to marry her. He found it a difficult offer to accept. Stimson was against it; he thought Frankfurter particularly fitted for public life. Holmes, who as a young man had attacked Plato, warned him of the dangers of the academic life as against thinking under fire, the irresponsibility of running the universe on paper. It was, however, something like the Platonic vision that in the end decided Frankfurter; Harvard would give him time to think, to know what he really thought about things.

He was able, as he had hoped, to combine teaching with work for social welfare, in fact literally, if we accept an unfriendly account in the pre-Villard *Nation* of his argument in the Supreme Court in 1917 for the constitutionality of Oregon's minimum wages and hours laws: "Professor Felix Frankfurter . . . had merely exchanged one group of pupils for another. He lectured the court quietly, . . . and . . . was becomingly tolerant when the gray-haired learners asked questions which seemed to him unnecessary, and gentle when he had to correct a mistaken assumption."

When we entered World War I, Frankfurter returned to government service, working chiefly on labor problems. At President Wilson's request he investigated several ugly situations. His report on the Mooney Case emphasized that the labor leader had been convicted on perjured testimony, and his report on the Bisbee deportations told how members of the I.W.W. had been forcibly removed from Bisbee to New Mexico and left to suffer in a desert town. His old hero, Theodore Roosevelt, much changed in the last few years, denounced him for failing to point out that the I.W.W. were revolutionaries as dangerous as the Bolsheviks. Even before Frankfurter returned to Harvard—he was at the Peace Conference as a Zionist—there was a movement to oust him. It failed, but it had seemed serious enough to Holmes to cause him to write to President Lowell in praise of Frankfurter.

Frankfurter took up teaching again in the fall of 1919, as popular with his students as ever, despite the Red Scare, and despite it as busy as ever in what were then considered radical causes: spending his Easter vacation fighting a labor injunction against the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, briefing at a federal judge's request the rights of aliens who were being deported as revolutionaries, presiding at a meeting for the recognition of Russia. Of an illiberal decision by Taft invalidating Arizona's labor injunction statute, Frankfurter complained in an unsigned *New Republic* editorial, "For all the regard that the Chief Justice of the United States pays to the facts of industrial life, he might as well have written this opinion as the Chief Justice of the Fiji Islands." In the England that Frankfurter so loved this statement might have sent him to jail, but it turned out to be an utterly safe one to be made in the United States, even by a lawyer who argued before the Supreme Court; for the next year, when Frankfurter lost the District of Columbia minimum wage case, not only his friend Holmes but Taft as well was on Frankfurter's side in dissent.

It WAS INEVITABLE that Frankfurter should come to the aid of Sacco and Vanzetti when he learned of the misleading character of Captain Proctor's testimony as a ballistics expert for the Commonwealth. Trained as a prosecutor under Henry Stimson, a man so scrupulously honorable that later as Secretary of State he was to abolish spying as a State Department function, Frankfurter could only be outraged—as the highest court of Massachusetts and the Lowell committee were not—by what was most likely routine shabby unfairness on the part of a prosecutor. Frankfurter's powerful argument in the March 1927 *Atlantic Monthly* failed to save the two men but shook opinion outside of Massachusetts; published as a book and used as the basis of the account of the case in *The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti,* it seems to have been one of the important sources of the belief that not only were the two men unfairly tried but also that they were innocent, a

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matter on which Frankfurter had expressed no opinion.

With the coming of the New Deal, Frankfurter moved from a position on the edge of power to its very center. He had known Roosevelt when they had both been in Washington, and Roosevelt when Governor of New York had asked his advice on occasion. Frankfurter refused Roosevelt's offer of the post of Solicitor General of the United States, although it was likely to lead to the Supreme Court, just as he had recently refused to go on the highest court of Massachusetts, another possible road to the Supreme Court. It may be that the prospect of a year at Oxford as Eastman Professor was irresistible. After his year in England, one of the happiest in his life, he continued teaching at Harvard, but he was in Washington often, frequently as a guest at the White House.

It is easy to exaggerate Frankfurter's role. The First New Deal was, after all, much more of a Columbia than a Harvard intellectual product. Frankfurter seems to have had little to do with the grand improvisations that were to control economic life; he was much more concerned with achieving some of the limited objectives of traditional liberalism, like the Securities Act that was intended to make Wall Street truthful, and the Public Utilities Holding Company Act, a Brandeisian kind of attack on bigness. His greatest personal success in legislation, writing the ideas in his book *The Labor Injunction* into law, the Norris-LaGuardia Act, had actually been effected in the Hoover administration, during which he had never stayed in the White House. But just because he held no position under Roosevelt and denied that he exercised any power and was discreet—writers still disagree whether this talkative man who indulged in reminiscences freely was for or against the Court-packing plan—he seemed to be Roosevelt's grey eminence, acting effectively behind the scenes like the Court Jew of some benevolent despotism, a sinister or saintly figure, depending on one's view of Jews and despots.

If there is any truth to Hugh Johnson's celebrated characterization of Frankfurter as "the most influential single individual in the United States," it lay in the fact that the country was feeling not so much the direct inflence of Frankfurter the adviser as the indirect influence of the great teacher of law. For years Frankfurter had been choosing law clerks for Holmes and Brandeis from the graduating class at Harvard Law School and had been recommending other bright young graduates for positions with some of the largest New York law firms. Now, with its huge expansion of activities under the New Deal, the government became the chief employer of young lawyers. For work in new fields whose nature was not quite known, young men with fresh open minds were wanted, and inevitably Frankfurter was called on to supply many of them. The Happy Hot Dogs, to use the phrase Frankfurter disliked, were by no means all of one kind, for many of them had been taught or had learned to think for themselves, some even to think their way into the closed world of Communism, a risk peculiar in the 30's to intellectuals of open mind.

When Holmes resigned in 1932, Benjamin Cardozo was so much his logical successor that President Hoover appointed him to the Court even though he was a Democrat and even though this gave a single state, New York, three judges. When Cardozo himself died early in July 1938, Frankfurter seemed to many the logical successor to both Cardozo and Holmes; he was exactly the kind of liberal that they were. For some reason Roosevelt was reluctant to accept the obvious. He said that he wanted someone from west of the Mississippi and had Frankfurter report to him on the qualifications of many men, but none would do.

While the search went on, Roosevelt found himself subjected to a mounting, and at times annoying, pressure from almost everyone whose opinion he respected to appoint Frankfurter. Justice Stone told the President that to form a distinguished court he would have to ignore geography. Ickes and Hopkins, disagreeing on so much, agreed on Frankfurter. Even the Chief Justice of Australia while on a visit to Washington wrote a memorandum urging his appointment. Rich Jews, according to Tom Corcoran, had convinced Roosevelt not to make the appointment. Presumably they were afraid that in a world in which Hitler was daily growing more powerful, Frankfurter's appointment would increase anti-Semitism. Roosevelt may have shared this feeling for he seems at one time to have hoped to wait until Brandeis retired, and Harold Laski even urged Brandeis to quit—or at least he told Ickes that he did—to make room for their friend. Brandeis stayed on, and Roosevelt finally, in January 1939, gave in. A fortnight after Frankfurter took his seat on the Court, Brandeis retired.

By the time of Frankfurter's appointment, the Court that Roosevelt had threatened to pack in 1937 was reduced to a hopeless minority. In part the Court had reformed itself, in part it had been reformed by Roosevelt. Without any change in its personnel it had melodramatically reversed its trend immediately after the Court-packing plan was announced, and in addition Roosevelt had already made two appointments and was to make two more within a year of Frankfurter's. There was no longer a majority on the Court who would declare that economic or welfare legislation would "deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law" or violate any other clause of the Constitution. The battle that Frankfurter was so well equipped to fight as Holmes's follower was already won.

Roosevelt's appointees by and large seem to

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have come on the Court with the view that their chief duty was to protect legislation from judges—that is, from themselves. As the old majority had been quick to find liberty infringed by welfare laws, the new majority was at first slow to act in the name of liberty, even in the case of regulations interfering with speech, religion, or the rights of Negroes. Frankfurter in the 20's had refused to be impressed by the occasional Supreme Court decisions against intolerant statutes. The Supreme Court could not guarantee toleration, he asserted, for much that was illiberal would still be constitutional and could be stopped not by a liberal court but only by a liberal community which would elect liberal legislators.

True to his views on constitutionality, Frankfurter early in June 1940 held that school authorities could expel two children who for religious reasons—their parents were Jehovah's Witnesses—refused to take part in the daily ceremony of saluting the flag. What astonishes us, if we do not keep in mind the date of the opinion and Frankfurter's personal background, is the issue that he sees involved in the case. It is no less than national unity, which is the basis of national security, and in its interest the school authorities had the right to determine that the compulsory flag salute was an appropriate means "to evoke that unifying sentiment without which there can ultimately be no liberties, civil or religious." While Frankfurter was delivering his opinion, German armies were sweeping through France; our survival seemed to him to be threatened. (Frankfurter, Ickes wrote in his diary at this very time, "is really not rational these days on the European situation.") In his opinion he never mentioned his own school days, but in his careful description of the flag ceremony one is aware of the earnest immigrant child to whom the daily ceremony must have been part of the natural way to become an American. It is as if he were willing to permit the state to try Pascal's method: if lighting a few candles and saying a few prayers every day, even without faith, can in the end make a man religious, perhaps saluting the flag daily, even against one's beliefs, may in the end bring one to the religion of the flag, patriotism.

FRANKFURTER'S friends were shocked by his decision, although it was completely in accord with his prior views and even in fact with theirs. For a few weeks there was an outbreak of illegal compulsory flag-saluting; people entered other people's houses carrying a flag and demanding that it be saluted. Moscow, Idaho adopted a regulation that to obtain a license to distribute circulars the applicant would have to salute the flag, a requirement that would of course keep Jehovah's Witnesses away. It was perhaps these unfortunate but unnecessary consequences of the case that caused Black and two other Roosevelt appointees to announce that they regretted their vote. A little over three years after Frankfurter's opinion, the Court reversed itself and held that school authorities could not compel a child who was a Jehovah's Witness to salute the flag. In the midst of a great war the Court found unconstitutional a compulsory ceremony of allegiance that it had upheld while we were still at peace.

Frankfurter stood fast. The most interesting part of his opinion is not his plea for self-restraint, which dissenting judges often address to the majority, but his warning on the logical implications of the decision. If not saluting the flag could be a matter of religious right protected by the Constitution, many questions that had always been left to local authorities for decision—free lunches or free transportation for children in parochial schools, compulsory reading of the King James version of the Bible in public schools—would become troublesome constitutional issues for the Court. One would assume that he meant that these were matters in which the Court should not interfere, yet when they did come before the Court he was on the side of interference, even to a more radical extent than the liberal majority. He voted with a minority to hold unconstitutional free transportation for parochial school children and the New York system of released time for off-premise religious instruction.

ON THE whole, however, Frankfurter was consistent in his career on the Court. As a liberal critic he had attacked a conservative Court for its seizure of power in outlawing legislation and was self-consciously determined not to be guilty of this offense. Generally, he practised the self-restraint he had preached and tried to be guided by those famous words of Cromwell that he had once as a lawyer urged on the Court as a guide. "Brethren . . . by the bowels of Christ I suffer ye to conceive it possible that ye may be wrong." But his judicial humility rarely sat easily on him. At times he almost glories in the unpleasantness of the legislation that it his judicial duty to uphold: ". . . whether immigration laws have been crude and cruel, whether they may have reflected xenophobia in general or anti-Semitism or anti-Catholicism, the responsibility belongs to Congress . . . ." There is a traditional view that the true greatness of a judge is most clearly shown when he acts against his deepest feelings; the ideal of this high impartiality is the elder Brutus condemning his sons to death and sitting sternly amid their mangled bodies.

If Frankfurter was to be faithful to Holmes and Brandeis, he had to uphold, as he did, the constitutionality of the Smith Act. Whether wisely or foolishly dealt with by the Smith Act, the Communist party in the United States during the Cold War of the late 40's was surely more of a threat to national welfare than the small group of radicals whose conviction in the 20's under the California Criminal Syndicalism Act was upheld by Holmes

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and Brandeis.* Frankfurter, with the majority in upholding the conviction of the Communist leaders, was also with the majority in reversing the conviction of second-string Communists for reasons difficult to understand if one pays attention only to what the Court said. Justice Harlan, who has great gifts of clarity of expression, wrote with incredible obscurity on this occasion, and Frankfurter, who so often wrote concurring opinions to clarify what the Court was deciding, was silent. If the Court's verbal logic was weak, its unexpressed strategic logic was probably sound; it left the Smith Act standing, but only for a possible serious crisis and not for use every day.

SIMILARLY, the Court tended not to stand up boldly to Congress on the question of the powers of its investigating committees. The Court seemed reluctant to define clearly the forbidden areas of Congressional inquiry infringing on freedom of speech and thought, but contented itself and Frankfurter with *ad hoc* decisions aiding Congressional committee victims by announcing rules not suspected before and not always followed consistently thereafter. The Congressional power of inquiry, one surmises, is too important an instrument of government to be seriously cut down, and the best the Court can do apparently is to try occasional evasive action. Freedom's victories are sometimes better won by unedifying devious means than by direct onslaughts of admirable, magnificent rhetoric.

Other judges, Black particularly, were for stronger action and a more open stand for freedom. One can, with a reasonable amount of distortion, see much of the history of the Court in Frankfurter's time as a slowly emerging struggle between a group of judges allied with Black and a group allied with Frankfurter, with Black's group the victor, expanding due process and extending the Court's power. The victorious group has found in the unchanging words of the Constitution a new set of prohibitions on government action, limiting police activities, overturning long-established modes of trial and traditional ways of electing legislatures. Misreading history creatively, Black has asserted that whatever the Bill of Rights forbids the federal government to do, it forbids also to the states. Frankfurter and other first-rate scholars have demolished the historical basis of Black's claim and have shown it to be a distortion of history, but this has not prevented the adoption by the Court of a considerable part of Black's position; possibly all that the scholars have demonstrated is that here, as with Magna Carta, bad history can make good law.

In the first of the reapportionment cases that was to lead ultimately to the rule, "One man, one vote," Frankfurter unashamedly urged the Court's weakness as a reason against its bold new course and unashamedly used the logic and language of the 18th century ("The Court's authority—possessed of neither the purse nor the sword . . .") to prove its weakness. Many students of the Court's history agreed with Frankfurter that only ill could come of the new venture. It appears, however, to have succeeded, and today it does not seem revolutionary to hold that if gerrymandering against Negroes and in favor of whites is unconstitutional, gerrymandering in favor of rural districts and against large cities—even when disguised as Jeffersonian political theory—deprives city folk of the equal protection of the laws.

The Court in the reapportionment cases, as in the desegregation cases, has of course done more than merely veto unconstitutional laws. It has had to govern, to supervise, with the aid of the lower federal courts, educational policies and plans of reapportionment. If the Court has moved into fields in which it would be theoretically more appropriate for others to act, they are fields in which as a practical matter no one would act but the Court. Perhaps the Court has come through its recent crises so well because it is felt that it has by and large seized power only where others have abandoned their duties.

A Congress for more than two decades illiberal and inactive, as far as the public welfare was concerned, may have made the liberal active Court appear so necessary. Liberal opinion thirty years ago, when the Court was obstructing Congress, was certain that a constitutional amendment was needed to curb the Court, which as long ago as the days of John Marshall had usurped power over acts of Congress. In recent years liberals, if they criticized the Court, have complained that it has not sufficiently curbed Congress, and John Marshall is now recognized as our greatest judicial statesman for having made the Court strong. It may be that if Congress continues to be as active for the public welfare as it was in the last session, our scale of values and our view of the role of the Court may change again.

If our sense of the eternal verities which are the Court's business shifts again, our appraisal of its members is likely to shift with it. At the moment, Felix Frankfurter may seem not to have measured up to the great expectations held out

*We forget that Brandeis's eloquent statement in the California case on freedom of speech, in which Holmes joined, was made in the course of a concurring, not a dissenting, opinion. After stressing that speech may be within the protection of the Constitution even if it advocates law-breaking and is likely to result in some violence, and that it can be suppressed only if there is clear imminent danger of a serious evil, Brandeis nevertheless found that assisting in the organization of the Communist Labor party of California and being a member of it and meeting with it could properly be held to be a felony. There was evidence, Brandeis stated, "which tended to establish . . . a conspiracy, on the part of members of the International Workers of the World, to commit present serious crimes; and likewise to show that such a conspiracy would be furthered by the activity of the [Communist Labor party]." Apparently all that the party had actually done was to commend the I.W.W. for its words and deeds and pledge support to it.

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for him on his appointment. No one appeared then so likely to be one of the greatest judges in our history as he. His entire life since he had entered Harvard Law School, a number of careers fine in themselves, could be regarded as training for his final career on the Court. As a student of the Court he was fully aware of the organic nature of the Constitution as a living instrument of government. Severe as his criticism of the Court was at times, he was deeply respectful of its traditions, especially as they were embodied in the work of his idol, Holmes.

And yet, perhaps he may have been the victim of his splendid training, unfitted by it for the work that the Court was actually called on to do. If he fell short of greatness it may be because he had been prepared by life for an era that was already past and was not to come again, at least in his lifetime. Holmes had said in speaking of John Marshall, "A great man represents a great ganglion in the nerves of society, or, to vary the figure, a strategic point in the campaign of history, and part of his greatness consists of his being *there*." Holmes himself had the good luck to have this part of greatness, and if Frankfurter did not, it may be just because he thought Holmes a great man. One sometimes has to deny a hero his stature to free oneself of his influence, and this Frankfurter, with his deep loyalty to Holmes, could never do.

If Frankfurter turns out ultimately to have failed of greatness, it will be probably because, like Holmes, he respected power in others and tried to refuse it for the Court on which he sat. Pleased as Frankfurter had always been with the sense of power, he lacked the ruthlessness necessary to those who would possess it; if this turns out to have been a fault, it will always be deemed, whatever else history says of him, to have been a most attractive failing.

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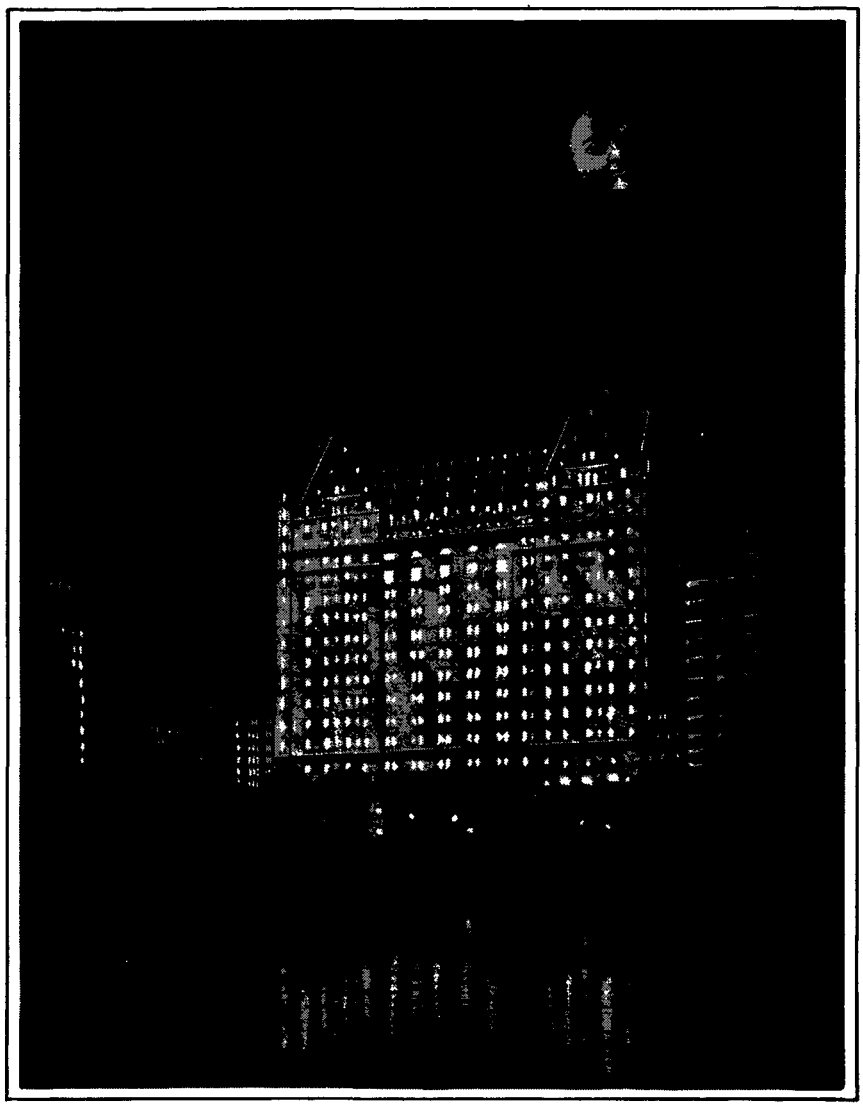
How to Make Love to a City



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Invite people in.
Treat them kindly.
Love will occur.

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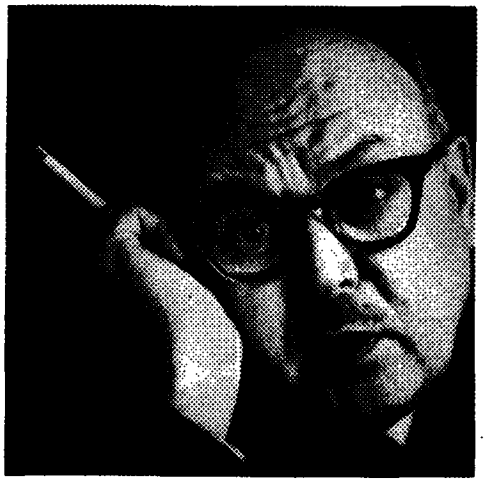

"Myrna has to have the last word.

'Of course it was the Yanks in '54,' I said.
'You're wrong, dear,' she said, 'it was Cleveland.'
We checked, and I was wrong.

'So you're pretty smart,' I said. 'You're wrong,'
she said, 'or why would I keep smoking these
tasteless cigarettes?'

'I told you to try my Kools,' I said, 'although
I know you won't.' 'Oh, you're wrong, dear,'
she said, lighting up.

"Well, she loved that taste of
extra coolness then and there.
'Darling, you're so right,'
she said...'At last!'

"Now just what did
she mean by that?"

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Come up to Kool Filter Kings

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Confronting the Holocaust: Three Israeli Novels

ROBERT ALTER

Most people in our time have the face of Lot's wife, turned toward the Holocaust and yet always escaping.

—Yehuda Amihai

WITH ALL the restless probing into the implications of the Holocaust that continues to go on in Jewish intellectual forums in this country, and at a time when there has been such an abundance of novels—even some good novels—by American Jews, it gives one pause to note how rarely American-Jewish fiction has attempted to come to terms in any serious way with the European catastrophe. Alfred Kazin, among others, has argued that no one can really write an imaginative work about the Nazi terror because art implies meaning, and Hitler's whole regime represented an organized annihilation of meaning. It would in any case be an act of spiritual presumption for someone other than a survivor to try to reconstruct the hideousness of the experience from within. But, even standing outside what actually happened, we all have to live with this irruption of utter meaninglessness into history, which implies, finally, that we have to make some kind of sense out of it, as Jews and simply as human beings. This is what historians, social commentators, literary intellectuals, and others over the past two decades have tried to do in introspective or even argumentative essays; it is just this that the more serious American-Jewish novelists have been unwilling or unable to do in their creative work. Two possible explanations for this disparity in response suggest themselves. It may be easier to reason discursively about the inconceivable, to box it in with words, than to assimilate it imaginatively; and, for a variety of reasons, American writers in recent years often seem to have found that the essay, not the novel, has offered the most dependable and penetrating kind of illumination into the dark areas of their inner life and the deepest perplexities of their moral world.

Although in Israel the reflective essay does not have this kind of ascendancy over the imaginative genres, there have been other reasons why Hebrew fiction, at least until fairly recently, has done almost as little as American fiction in the way of looking into the wound of consciousness left by the destruction of European Jewry. (Survivors of the Holocaust living in Israel and writing in Hebrew must of course be excepted from this and all that follows.) Israeli writers, to begin with, have all been participants in a very different kind of major historical event—the rebirth through armed struggle of an independent Jewish state. It was not only that this latter event was more immediate, more palpable, more humanly comprehensible than the grim events in Europe that preceded it, but also that those terrible events raised certain disturbing questions about the values and the very existence of the Jewish state which, at least for a time, Israeli writers were not prepared to confront. During the 50's, Hebrew fiction came to be more and more a medium for wrestling with problems, both personal and cultural, but not this particular problem. In a purely descriptive sense, I would say that there is something strikingly adolescent about Israeli fiction of the 50's. In a number of the important Hebrew novels of this period, the major characters are all, in fact, adolescents; plot and dialogue serve as means for the characters (and the writer) to work out identity crises in a sustained effort consciously to come of age. As one might expect, these adolescent heroes and their retrospectively adolescent authors have little interest in anything that is outside the immediate circumambience of a self struggling for definition, anything beyond the youth movement, the army, the party, papa and mama's bourgeois staidness or old-fashioned Zionism, sweet Dalia or Shura and that moonlit night of first nakedness on the shore of Lake Tiberias.

I AM NOT completely sure whether Israeli fiction of the 60's is getting significantly better (though I suspect that it is), but it has clearly gone beyond this stage. Israeli writers now more typically turn to the adult society in which they actually live, where the problems of self-definition are set in the complicating context of urban existence, professional responsibilities, and married life, where the characters have lived through enough to realize that what is most profoundly relevant to them is not always identical with what immediately impinges on them. Even the retrospective novel of adolescence, as we shall see, is now able to imagine its subject in circumstances that more firmly engage it in a complex historical reality.

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As the Israeli writer in recent years has been better able to see his own condition entangled in a broad network of social, cultural, historical particulars, both the passage of time and the pressure of public events have pushed the European experience more toward the center of his awareness. The Israeli-Arab war seems to have been a kind of collective trauma for many sensitive young Israelis. Several of the most serious Hebrew novels of the 50's tried to work out the terror of an experience in which the sons of the pioneer-conquerors of desert and swamp were called upon to fight people, to kill in the name of the state. But as the sharpness of this experience now gradually fades, the raw edges of the deeper, darker trauma that preceded it begin to be exposed. At the same time, the events of the past four or five years have repeatedly focused attention on Israel's morally problematic relationship with Germany. The imminent end of reparations made many people in Israel aware of the extent to which the country's economy was dependent on these payments from Germany, for the horrors inflicted upon European Jews. The arms deal with Bonn pointed to an even more grimly ironic dependence of Jew on German for instruments of destruction. The prospect of diplomatic relations with Germany, finally realized last summer, introduced a note of inescapable conclusiveness to the official acceptance by the Jewish state of postwar Germany. And looming behind all these events in the early 60's is the figure of the mass murderer in his glass cage in Jerusalem, with all the storm of worldwide debate, moral and legal, about him, about his being there, about what he represented.

It is against this general background that, in 1963, the first important novel by an Israeli dealing with the Holocaust appeared, Yehuda Amihai's *Not of This Time and Place*. For the sake of accuracy, I should say that Amihai was born in Germany, from where he was brought to Palestine in 1936 at the age of twelve. The fact of his German childhood, his awareness of kin and earliest friends murdered by the Nazis, clearly determines the broad direction of the sections of his novel set in Germany, and yet the general attempt of the book to make moral contact with the destruction and its perpetrators is eminently that of an Israeli beyond the experience, not of a European Jew actually torn by it. Indeed, the peculiar structure of the novel—a brilliant but not fully worked out invention of Amihai's—provides a kind of diagrammatic illustration of the difficulties Israeli writers have in trying to imagine this ultimate catastrophe and how one can live with the knowledge of it.

THE HERO of Amihai's novel is a young archaeologist at the Hebrew University—quite obviously, a man dedicated to digging up buried layers of the past. Like the protagonist of virtually every Hebrew novel of consequence over the last ten years, he has gradually fallen into an unsettling sense of aimless drift after the challenging years immediately before and after Israel's independence. At the beginning of the book, we find him wondering whether he ought to stay in Jerusalem for the vacation and perhaps find some great, intoxicating love (he is married and vaguely loyal to his wife), or spend the summer in Germany confronting the murderers of his childhood companion, Ruth. The wife of a friend—we afterward discover that she is about to be committed to an asylum—tells him that he must do both these things at once. And so he does. That is, the novel splits into two alternating narratives, one continuing in the third person to report a summer of sensual abandon in Jerusalem with an American woman named Patricia, the other switching to the first person to tell the story of the same character's return to his native city of Weinberg for the purpose of "wreaking vengeance," as he dimly and grandiosely puts it, on the Nazi murderers. The hero of the novel, to cite a mythic parallel that Amihai alludes to obliquely, is a kind of bifurcated Odysseus: he descends into the underworld in hope of encountering the spirits of the dead and learning from them his own future, and, simultaneously, he lolls in the paradisiac bed of Calypso, the alien goddess who keeps him from the responsibilities of home and people.

Amihai clearly means to suggest that both experiences—eros in the city of Jerusalem, thanatos in the town of Weinberg—must be exhausted to enable his hero to find some new point of anchorage for his life. But what actually happens in the novel is that the Jerusalem sequence is vividly and convincingly realized, while the German episodes, despite many arresting moments, occur in a hazy twilight region between memory and fantasy, history and self-dramatization. This attempt of the novelistic imagination to immerse itself in the aftermath of the horror ends up being a kind of earnest exercise in synthesizing the literature of nightmare—dramatic situations from Kafka; motifs from Rilke; and from Agnon, style (the aphorisms of the abyss), narrative technique (the expressionism of Agnon's *Book of Deeds*), and even symbolic plot outline (Agnon's *Wayfarer Stopped for the Night*, also about a man from Jerusalem who returns to a destroyed European home town in a futile search for the world of his childhood). Amihai intends his protagonist to discover both the old and the new Germany, but in fact his archaeologist of the self wanders about in a Germany compounded of symbols through which historical actualities are only intermittently glimpsed. One gets the uneasy sense that events happen only in order to be available as symbols: there is a roller-skating competition in Weinberg, to serve as the occasion for reflections on the pointless way our lives go round and round in the postwar era; a little German girl is named Sybil, to trigger a meditation on pagan prophecy and apocalypse;

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a cynical Indian appears in Weinberg solely to gather material for a book about Despair, and to pronounce bleak epigrams on that subject.

THE JERUSALEM sections of the novel also reflect Amihai's fondness for symbols, but in this case the unique city he knows so intimately affords him a very natural symbolic landscape. No one else has caught with such sharpness the bizarre, slightly mad life of the intelligentsia in Jerusalem, with its serious academic types, its bohemian poets and artists, its drifting cultists from home and abroad, sundry amateurs of Yoga, Zen, vegetarianism, and the Kabbalah. No one else has been so imaginatively alive to the uncanny suggestiveness of Jerusalem's stark location at the borders of the desert, the sky, and the enemy.

> Joel walked along, carrying the bundle of Patricia's dress under his arm. With great happiness he felt the dress and with great happiness he felt the city, its houses and empty lots, and the no-man's land beyond them. He felt the shards and rubble, the rusting oil drums, and the barbed-wire fences in which flying pieces of paper were caught as the wind shifted. No-man's land served as a kind of strainer. A strainer of hatred, of the past, of distant history. It was also the place of mines, the maps for which had been lost, so that no one knew where they were buried. And behind all the hubbub, the buildings and the walls, with no transition, the desert stretched out. All at once a desert of many hills rising in heavy, silent folds all the way to the mountains of Moab.

In passages like this, Amihai does not have to "work up" his symbols because they are already there in his city: the freight of meaning in landscape and objects is as immediately *felt* as the palpable burden of clothing imbued with Patricia's physical presence. But it is significant that the sense of reality radiates out from an object associated with sensuality; this explains much of the disparity between the two halves of the novel and, as I shall try to show, is an orientation explicitly shared by other Israeli writers in attempting to create a credible world against the unthinkable background of the Holocaust. Where horror has deadened the nerve of response to reality, made it difficult to believe in the real world, it seems as though there is a natural movement toward the primal act through which the body affirms life, in an effort to recapture the sheer sense of being alive. "They wanted to stretch out over reality," Amihai writes of his lovers, fusing the act of love with Elisha's miraculous resuscitation of the dead child in the Biblical story, "eye to eye, mouth to mouth, and to give it life again with their own breath." But the miracle is not achieved, and Amihai's hero comes at some points to feel that the only fully credible reality is a purely sexual one: "The whole world seemed to Joel to be emptied, and covered over with canvas and tin and flimsy boards, like the world of stalls and stands in a fair. The last and only thing actual to him was Patricia's body. Not even her speech, but the sinking into her."

This sexual submergence, however, means forgetting both personal and collective history. Early in the novel, we are introduced to one of the protagonist's friends, a survivor of the death camps who has had the tattoo of a mermaid superimposed upon the tattooed number on his arm—not in order to obliterate the grim blue figures but to leave them just barely perceptible through the lines of the mythological female form. As the image of the ambiguous tattoo floats in and out like an apparition through both halves of the narrative, Patricia is associated with the mermaid and the sea: she is seen as a bowsprit figure on an old ship, her favorite skirt is made of sailcloth, the pitch of ecstatic fulfillment to which she brings her lover makes him think of "waves, waves." Amihai finally turns her into a mythic embodiment of all the allurements of otherness for his protagonist (with a redeeming touch of playfulness, since he seems aware of the comic aspects of our modern penchant for mythicizing experience). Patricia is American and Christian, she is imagined by her lover as a sort of female Davy Crockett, a creature of the Wild West, half lizard and half mare; she is Venice, the sea-city that is the antithesis of mountainous Jerusalem, or, alternately, she is the Jerusalem of no-man's land (the Hebrew equivalent literally means "area of abandonment"). The sea, however, remains the chief mythic sphere with which Patricia is associated, a sea at once attractive and potentially destructive to the man whose calling is to delve into the parched earth covering the dead past. As a physician friend dabbling in Kabbalah pointedly tells Joel, "Lilith comes from the sea."

THE THEMATIC complement to this absorption of life by erotic experience in Jerusalem is the fantasy of sexlessness in the German half of the novel. The narrator dreams of becoming an "angel" (the Hebrew *malakh* also suggests "messenger," a being with a single, appointed purpose) in order to carry out unswervingly his schemes of revenge. He looks at the display in a toy-shop window and compares the hesitancy of flesh and blood with the implacable fixity of the manufactured object: "All dolls, even the most perfect ones, have no sexual organs; they are angels." The opposition between this fantasy in the town of Weinberg and the sexual actuality in Jerusalem sets up a dilemma that the resolution of the novel cannot cope with. Amihai's attempt at a denouement is to arrange for the destruction of the Jerusalem-Joel while the Weinberg-Joel comes home, having undergone some undefined catharsis, ready to resume his life, though tentative about himself and unsure of the future. The thematic development of the novel, however, suggests that there is no way out for this

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self divided by love and death. The only means by which Amihai's protagonist can enter into active relation with the European past, that grisly realm of mass-produced death, is to divest himself of his humanity, and this is no more possible for him than it is really desirable. But the other self, the one that revives its humanity by obliterating past and future in the sweet intensity of the sexual present, is also living a lie. The dark revelations of history from 1933 to 1945 are too radical in implication to be forgotten with impunity. This, in any case, would seem to be what is suggested by the incident with which the Jerusalem plot concludes: the dangerous buried residue of the past—an unmarked mine from another war—explodes beneath the neglectful archaeologist as he tries to untangle the knot of conflicts in his love for his mistress and his love for his wife.

DURING THE past year, two more Israeli novels of unusual interest that attempt to deal with the Holocaust have appeared, Haim Gury's *The Chocolate Deal* and Hanoch Bartov's *Wounds of Maturity*. Each of the two novels is remarkably different from Amihai's, neither could be said to be "influenced" by the earlier book, but the extent to which Gury and Bartov share Amihai's moral problematics is equally remarkable. The authors of the two more recent novels are both native Israelis about the same age as Amihai: Bartov served in Europe with the Palestinian unit of the British army at the end of World War II; Gury is the author of a book-length account of the Eichmann trial and has translated Elie Wiesel into Hebrew. Of the two, Gury is closer to Amihai in his technical handling of the European experience, possibly because he, like Amihai, is a poet writing his first novel; the strategies he adopts to get a hold on his intractable subject are more typically poetic than novelistic.

The Chocolate Deal is set in the rubble of a large German city (Berlin?) in the months immediately following the war. Rubie Kraus and Mortie Neuberg, two old friends who in their separate paths of flight have managed to survive the Nazis, meet by chance in a dreary railroad station. Rubie has schemes of establishing himself through the help of a rich uncle, one of the prominent lawyers of the city; Mortie, knowing that the uncle and his family were sent to the death camps, tries to dissuade his friend from going in search of his relatives. It does not take us long to realize that the sketchy action of the novel constitutes a parable about the moral ambiguities of survival. Of the two returned refugees, Mortie is unfluctuating in his loyalty to his slaughtered fellow-Jews, but this loyalty proves to be, necessarily, a relationship impregnated with death. "There is no future in me," says Mortie (whose name may even pun on the French *mort*). Living for him means the necessity for joining hands with the murderers and their accomplices—nature itself, the birds in the sky and the spring rain, seem to him silent collaborators with the planners of the Final Solution. Mortie dies mysteriously and symbolically about halfway through the book, just at the moment when Rubie is in bed with a German woman, the first woman he has had since the war. When the lights come on and the plot unfolds, she turns out to be his old mistress and a former servant of his uncle's; during the war she had apparently been a kind of Gestapo camp-follower, and she is now doubling as a streetwalker and as a servant to the German doctor who has usurped the house of Rubie's uncle.

Because Rubie wants money, he conceives a plan of blackmailing this German doctor into issuing false medical statements to influence the price of surplus chocolate that the American occupation forces have been dumping on the local market. His course of action clearly illustrates the other half of the dilemma of survival raised by his friend Mortie. The only way to keep one's loyalty to the dead uncontaminated, is to die. A Jew who wants to go on living in a world of murderers must end up cashing in somehow on the murderers' guilt—one thinks of Israel and the reparations issue—and thus must become implicated in the guilt himself. The weakness of Gury's formulation of the moral quandary generated by the Holocaust is apparent: like most parabolic fiction, his novel states moral alternatives too sharply, not leaving a sufficient middle ground of possibilities between the extremes.

The Chocolate Deal does, however, handle its subject with an imaginative richness scarcely suggested by this abstract of its moral argument. Gury has used his resources as a poet—in a more calculated fashion, I think, than Amihai—to create a world in which the metaphysical implications of the Holocaust will be everywhere manifest. The sense of time, after the breakdown of history, is dulled, confused; time speeds up, skids along erratically, stops dead, allowing no meaningful progression. Action itself then becomes arbitrary: one act will do as well as another; fantasy, accident, and choice are indifferent alternatives; the narrated event becomes (as in Amihai) the sketching out of mere possibility, not the report of accomplished fictional fact. In this *univers concentrationnaire*, place, too, is emptied of its distinctiveness so that one gray setting is almost interchangeable with another; and, finally, individuality is blurred, a character may have several, simultaneous identities (like Rubie's mistress) or may be a mere counter to which some future identity could be assigned. The bleakly elegiac prose and the disorienting generality of descriptive viewpoint in the following passage typify much of the novel:

> Slowly, slowly, the ways turn to meet. Time passes, false healer, giving to the suffering the potion of forgetfulness to quiet them, to take them further away. Sending the lost to sleep

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> the very extended sleep, till the last trumpet. A gap yawns wider and wider between the remembrers and those who are remembered, and there the rivers flow, and there are the seasons of the year, and there the cities dark-gray in the snows, cities of marble and gold in the sun. In the purple conflagrations. And there the privilege of those who move to demur to the silence, to dream, to go onward.

In this world of flattened dimensions where roads, rivers, seasons, and time all run together on the same plane of occurrence, even a hint of affirmation—"those who move to demur to the silence"—is partly withheld through a kind of syntactic reticence. A more precise syntax would imply an explicit and coherent ordering of existence in which Gury is unable to believe. His most distinctive stylistic trait is the verb followed directly by an infinitive, with the logical connection between the two suppressed, as at the beginning and end of this passage, or in sentences like "This time is dying away to be finished." The disjuncture here between the process and the end-product of the process, between the happening in time marked by the temporal verb and the absolute state marked by the infinite verb, is the quintessential expression of Gury's post-Holocaust world—a present which scarcely dares think of the past or hope for the future, where one empty now crumbles into another, ceaselessly, to the unimaginable end of time, "the last trumpet."

The Chocolate Deal suggests two ways out of this bleak prison of the present. The first, and more convincingly realized, avenue of escape is sexuality. Gury's protagonist, like Amihai's, plunges into the sphere of sensual otherness of an alien woman in order to revive the sense of life in himself, though the symbolic retreat from Jewish selfhood involved in the act is stated more extremely here than in Amihai because the woman in this case is directly connected with the murderers. But where Amihai imagines the act of love contracting life into the present, Gury sees in it a moment that partakes of past and even future—always, however, in a personal or mythic sense, never historically: "On the other side of the emptied space [between their bodies] is his own private messianic era. . . . And now he is about to perform an act ancient as death, surviving beyond him." It is significant that the one moment in the novel when memory comes fully alive is Rubie's recollection of a distant night of pleasure with his uncle's maid. At other points the past is caught obliquely in confusing fragments, or, in the one case of Mortie's account of his war years, it is rehearsed consecutively in the deadened, somnambulistic voice of the present. By contrast, the details of Rubie's sensual memory are unaffected by the passage of time: the glint of the August moon through the blinds, the chill touch of the brass doorknob that turned to the left, the suntanned body against the white sheets—through these sensuous particulars the past for once becomes present.

The other gateway from the present, but this time to an historical, not merely personal, past, is through an acceptance of the terrible paradoxes of survival while actively engaging heart and mind in the fate of those who were murdered and also of those who managed to escape. It is here that Gury is most reticent of all, perhaps because, with the kind of integrity he has, he is afraid that any affirmation of "the tragic necessity for commitment" may quickly degenerate into a slogan. This is clearly the alternative that it is most important to imagine and most difficult to imagine honestly. Though Gury concludes his novel on a note of commitment to the martyred ones, he manages no more than a thinly symbolic gesture. Earlier in the book, Mortie had told of meeting a certain Mr. Schecter at the end of the war. Mr. Schecter, a watchsmith (obviously, the man who is to remind his fellow-Jews of time and history), was genuinely concerned for Mortie, acted vaguely to tie him to his pre-war past. At the end of the novel, as Rubie stands over Mortie's grave—the whole Chocolate Deal, we suddenly realize, has been a projected possibility, not an action carried out—someone calls to him, portentously, "Reuben Kraus? Mr. Schecter is looking for you." The intention here is surely admirable, but Mr. Schecter has been only a shadowy figure in the book, and I do not think this is one of those moments of achieved art that help us see into the dark places of our existential quandaries.

HANOCH BARTOV's *Wounds of Maturity* is less original in technique than the other two novels, but it succeeds in throwing into sharper focus the perplexed problems of national values involved in an Israeli's attempt to relate to the grim past. Bartov's first-person narrator, the eighteen-year-old Elisha Kruk, begins his story with the words, "About the surrender." He has enlisted in the Palestinian Regiment of the British army in hopes of redeeming his self-respect as a Jew by participating actively in the battle against his people's enemy. But his unit has not yet made contact with the German forces in Italy when the Nazi surrender is announced. This pattern of frustrated intention recurs in a series of memorable variations through the remainder of the novel. The company of Palestinian soldiers goes rolling north toward Germany, with the chalk-scrawled menace of *Die Juden kommen!* on the tarpaulin sides of their transport trucks—only to be halted at the border, where they are stationed in a small Italian town. After a delay of almost two months, the Palestinians get orders to move into Germany, but on the last night in Italy, their camp-site is inundated by a flash-flood, and when the self-styled avengers cross the German border, this is the figure they cut: "Along the sides of our vehicles we had stretched out lines and belts and had hung up our clothes to dry, and our

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bodies we covered with whatever had been rescued from the water. We looked like a traveling camp of gypsies."

This is, of course, an old story in war fiction: it goes all the way back to the farcical frustrations of Fabrice del Dongo, Stendhal's aspirant to heroism at the tail-end of the Napoleonic Wars. But the familiar anti-heroic theme assumes a special gravity and morally problematic nature when it is associated with an Israeli's relation to the destruction of European Jewry. Bartov's novel makes one point particularly clear: the Holocaust raises larger questions for an Israeli than for an American Jew because it casts a long shadow of doubt on the new vision of Jewish identity implicit in the creation of a modern Jewish state. If the new Jew is, ideally, a kind of reincarnation of the rebuilder of Jerusalem in Nehemiah, "one hand performing the work, the other holding his weapon," what is such a figure to make of six million of his people allowing themselves to be led off to the slaughter, and what good is his own brave posture of armed self-assertion as a response to Nazi monstrosities, for which any conceivable retribution through violence could be only the nightmare of a maniac? The point of the novel's vaguely melodramatic title is that the young Palestinian begins to discover through his encounter with both the survivors and the perpetrators of the Holocaust who he is—that whoever he may be, he is not the man on the Zionist poster out of Nehemiah, and not so different, perhaps, from Jews in other lands.

Bartov has an extraordinary gift for inventing dramatic situations that bring into high relief the contrast between what his Palestinian soldiers really can be and what they are expected to be, by others and also by themselves. The first of these scenes takes place in a pizzeria in Bologna, where Elisha Kruk finds himself hauled into the victory celebration of a group of wildly drunken Negro soldiers. When they finally understand that he comes from Palestine, one of them hails him in the style of an evangelist preacher as "the youth from the city of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Lord Jesus our Savior." Kruk, drunk himself, is prodded into a dizzying speech on the miraculous splendors of the holy city of Bethlehem, in fact a dirty little Arab town. The tipsy hallelujah cries that punctuate Kruk's fantastic oration set the keynote for the role of the Jewish soldiers as spurious redeemers. Later, Kruk and three of his friends will come upon their first actual refugees from the camps—a group of pious Hungarian tailors sitting in a basement at their Sabbath meal, singing the traditional table-hymns about the coming of the Messiah. At the entrance of the soldiers, the tailors leap up from their places, clutch the young men to make sure of their reality; they are ready to pack, in the middle of the Sabbath, and to be led by these Jewish men of war across the sea to the Promised Land. The Palestinians, of course, can only respond lamely—the authorities will arrange these matters, one must be patient and wait for official procedures—and so the tailors' cries of enthusiasm die in their throats.

STILL MORE disturbing for the soldiers are the encounters in which their own image of themselves as a bold new breed of Jews is theatened. Kruk and his friends meet a handful of deported Ukrainian women, sitting by the roadside cooking their morning *kasha*. The soldiers are unable to convince the women that they are members of the "Jewish Army." The women, in a kind of obscene coquetterie, take this claim as some obscurely ribald joke and answer with a knowing wink: "We've seen the Jewish armies; in chariots of flame they went up to heaven, in columns of smoke." The ambiguous question of kinship with European Jewry becomes most agonizing when Kruk discovers an actual cousin in a refugee camp. His initial eagerness is dissipated in a moment as his cousin tells him nonchalantly, almost proudly, how he managed to survive by working in a crematorium. "More than anything else," Kruk says of himself, "I was filled with the terror of belonging to him. More than the shock, more than the disgust." Such inability to face the survivor, twisted as he may be by his experience, is clearly a more immediate problem for the Israeli than for the American because in Israel the survivor is everywhere.

The most crucial inadequacy, however, in the Hebrew soldiers' attempt to take hold of this unmanageable historical reality, is revealed in the fantasies of revenge to which a few of them give voice. The logical consequence of a Jew's learning to fight for himself, as others do, would seem to be that he should take bloody vengeance for himself, as others do. What will we say, wonder the angrier of the young men, when our children ask us some day why we failed to use this one possible moment of history to pay back a little for all the horrors that were done to us? "We are here as blood-redeemers. For one wild Jewish vengeance. Just once like the Tartars, like the Ukrainians, like the Germans." Or, as the chief advocate for the course of revenge puts the case with more intellectual subtlety, possibly thinking in the Nietzschean idiom of Jabotinsky's Revisionist ideology, "One can free oneself from the fear of the bestial crime only by means of bestial retribution."

But any retribution the young soldiers try to take is hesitant, bungling, and, of course, grotesquely inadequate. The one attempt at vengeance, moreover, almost carried out in the novel, provides the culmination to that series of revelatory scenes begun in the pizzeria through which the Palestinians are forced to face their own inner weakness, the uncertainty of their ideals. Elisha Kruk and his cynical (European) friend Brotsky have billeted themselves in the home of an SS officer who has fled, leaving behind his wife and grown daughter. From their room upstairs, Kruk and Brotsky hear two other Jewish soldiers break

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into the kitchen and attack the women. Brotsky sits listening intently to the struggle below with a "glassy smile." Kruk, frightened by the reflection of himself that he sees in Brotsky's expression and unnerved by the women's shrieks, seizes his rifle, rushes downstairs, and angrily orders the would-be rapists out of the house. Bartov makes it clear that Kruk's deliverance of the Geman women is *not* a moral act—it proceeds from weakness, just as to join the rapists would have confessed to a different kind of weakness. Kruk, like Isaac Babel's Jewish soldier, might well dream of having "the simplest of proficiencies—the ability to kill my fellow-men"; but he knows, perhaps better than the Babel character, that he is compelled by his nature and upbringing to remain achingly human in a world that is for the most part callously inhuman. "In a single moment," he comments on his response to the quaking vulnerability of the assaulted women, "all the anthems of hate were wiped away and I was once more Papa's son. Wallowing in purity. A human being. A crapped up human being. Now I know, that's what we are, condemned to go around with the divine image on our forehead like the mark of Cain."

BARTOV's protagonist, like Amihai's and Gury's, is at least temporarily pulled away from the world of harsh moral confrontations by an alien woman, in his case a sensually generous, high-class Venetian whore, appropriately named Felicia. She nearly succeeds in keeping him with her in Venice just when his company is receiving orders to move into Germany; and, later, when he tries to focus his hatred for the Germans, the memory of her vivid body intervenes and confuses him. It is clear that to luxuriate with Felicia and to violate the women of Germany are simply two different alternatives of alienation from self for the young Palestinian: he literally flees from Felicia's sun-drenched bedroom as he psychologically flees from the bestial darkness of the rape. In the end, Elisha Kruk has no choice but to go on with his old Jewish self, understanding now its terrible inadequacies, its confusions and cowardice—and, just possibly, its potential for moral sensitivity. Bartov concludes his novel by recalling, as does Amihai, the image of Lot's wife in order to suggest his protagonist's relationship with the Holocaust: " 'I will never turn my face back there,' I whisper like an incantation over the bleeding memory, but my thoughts turn into pillars of salt."

All these novels, Bartov's most explicitly, suggest the moral purpose that Hebrew fiction on the Holocaust is trying to fulfill: the writers do not seek to scare themselves or their readers with horror stories, but, recognizing the necessity to exist now in the presence of the ultimate horror, they want to see by its baleful light what a Jew can discover about himself, how he can go on with the difficult business of living unillusioned and yet reponsible. The novel is an ambiguously potent means to this end. Because it creates its own world, it can place us at the nexus of time, place, and event where a dilemma raised by history is totally felt, in this way overcoming the distance of abstraction and analysis inherent in discursive treatments of the same dilemma. But because the novel necessarily manipulates the elements of its own world, it may inadvertently contrive reality, reducing it to an overly simple scheme. Both the inherent advantage in the novelistic approach to moral issues and its potential weakness are present in the three novels we have been considering, but the general effect of each of the books is clearly to bring us a little closer to the imponderable realities of recent history and of our identity as Jews. It is not easy to think of another area of contemporary Jewish culture, either in Israel or America, where the written word and the imagined act have been used with such self-critical intentness, such freedom from moral posturing and institutional cant, or where such an unflinching effort has been made to look into the abysses flung open by the Holocaust in our individual and also our collective lives as Jews.

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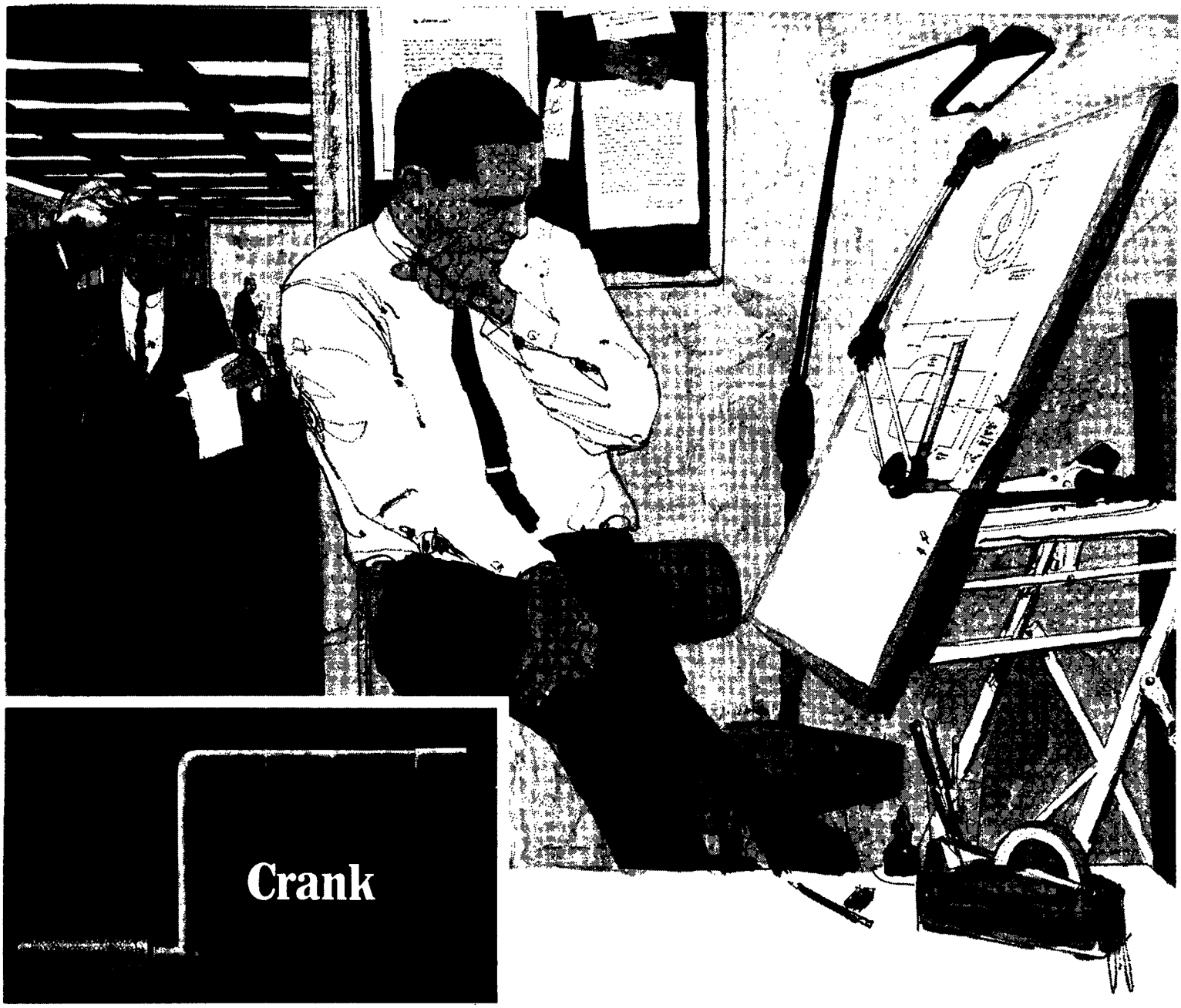

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THE BEST OF BROADWAY

Jack Richardson

JOHN Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence* is a brilliant collection of notes for a play. One sits through the first act wondering and relishing what might be done to the gobbets of character, turns of phrase, points of view, bickering, and ranting of protagonist Bill Maitland. Who is this man desultorily popping epithets out at the world, this snorting fornicator suffering from migraine headaches? Who is this less than first-rate solicitor who compulsively puts himself on trial and then quacks with apposite viciousness at anyone who judges him? Where will Mr. Osborne deposit all these vital observations on what it is like to be a middle-class, middle-aged Englishman with enormous but self-stultifying appetites? Unfortunately, the answer to the last is that they are deposited in the play's second act where Osborne defines not Bill Maitland's random collection of personality traits, but his own. As in *The Entertainer* and *Look Back in Anger,* Osborne bets all on the rage and wit of one character, and, indeed, he does treat us to good harangues, so long as the character keeps drawing out the worm of argument from himself. It is when the playwright accepts the task of building a drama around his hero that the proceedings become muddled, the air gets sodden with social perceptions, and the hero's vitality is sapped. John Osborne is the most expert dramatist in English today at presenting a man's self-loathing on the stage and still keeping him from self-absorbed whines. One wonders, since he is essentially writing single-character plays as it is, whether it might not be best if he dispensed altogether with plots, supporting roles, beginnings, middles, and ends, and allowed his Bill Maitlands, Jimmy Porters, and Archie Leachs to have a go at an audience without being handicapped by dead theatrical weight.

In the first act of *Inadmissible Evidence* he almost does just this. To begin with, we have a prologue, apparently Bill Maitland's dream, in which he stands in a witness box and tries both to defend and to illuminate his inadequacies. It is essentially a monologue, half in officialese gibberish, half in his own sharp vernacular. This prologue, followed by a first act which—because of Maitland's garrulity and the good, old-fashioned use of telephone conversations—kept the singular focus going, was the play, the art, the theatrics, or whatever you wish to call it, of the evening. Watching Maitland twisting through his squalid affairs, business failures, boredom, fears and psychosomatic ills, one found the random sputterings fascinating. What matter if there was little aesthetic coherence to them? Separately and of themselves they flashed enough interest to keep our minds alert and surprised. And the very silence or tepid response to them by the other characters made us grant Maitland all the indulgence needed for his mean, crude thrusts back at them. When the first-act curtain drops on this pinioned lawyer, we know all we need to know about him.

All, that is, unless some action is to follow that might lead us out of one man's labyrinthine way into a maze for many. But in the second act, Maitland all but vanishes. Time is taken for disquisitions on homosexuality and the law's treatment of same, a long diatribe against, and for, the English teenager, and some grousing about flaccid sex practices. This act was Osborne's, not Maitland's, and not only was it a barren enterprise, but it served the pernicious function of divesting a character of the dynamics we had admired in him earlier. It is not that simple depiction of character is insufficient theater; it is rather that if the soil in which that character stands is unfertile, he will, in the mind of the beholder at least, wither and die no matter what his earlier strengths. Thus, Osborne leaves us with a sense of stylistic as well as thematic moribundity. And that, considering all the antic material he had to work with, is indeed a double misfortune.

HOWEVER, one need not qualify praise of Nicol Williamson's performance as Maitland. Tall, sloping, sporting a wispy, petulant mustache and an orchid of sagging blond curls about his neck, he looks like some outsized degenerate cherub as he gulps, blinks, and snorts his way through the role Osborne has given him. Acting is, I believe, the most elusive art among those subject to criticism, but I think I can fix my admiration on one element of Mr. Williamson's skill in the performance I saw: speed. No, I do not mean by this some George Abbott "pacing" where lines are desperately shot back and forth across the stage precisely on cue before they vanish altogether. What Williamson has is the ability to go through a jungle of observation and perception, show us each path he is taking and do so long before we discover it for ourselves. When American actors get that deep in topography, they spend hours musing over and gazing at the local fauna until the audience fears its clothes may go out of style before the performer wanders back into daylight. Not so Mr. Williamson. He is always ahead of us. Tapping his fingers, musing on his thumb, dropping his voice in self-accusation, or clamoring for help on a telephone, he keeps just a little bit in front of Osborne's words. More a playwright cannot ask.

PETER WEISS's *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat As Performed by the Inmates of*

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the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade—to get that over with at once—arrived in New York from Germany (via the London production of Peter Brook) under two stylistic flags: one bearing the heraldics of Total Theater, the other those of the Theater of Cruelty. To those uninitiated in drama theory, the first means little more than that music and dance are affixed to a play (is a Broadway musical comedy "Total Theater"?), and the second, created by Antonin Artaud, a voice whom nature has mercifully silenced, proposes that an audience should be goaded into subjective agony until, to bring out Artaud's most frequently-cited concept, we all become spectators waving at each other through flames. Needless to say, there has been as much critical babble over these notions as there has been over Weiss's play. It is a depressing sign in all the arts that critics seem more eager to discuss the penumbra of theory a work wears than the work itself. The reason may be that, as in Pop Art, the theories, social and aesthetic, are more interesting than their subjects. In the case of *Marat/Sade,* however, this is not true.

Oddly enough, with all its theoretical panoply, the play is essentially a dialogue. The inmates of the Charenton Asylum, for therapeutic reasons ostensibly, put on a play written by Sade. Its principal characters are Sade himself and Jean-Paul Marat, propagandist for the French Revolution at its most sanguinary, seated in his medicinal bathtub. Sade speaks his own lines; Marat is portrayed by an inmate. As might be expected from this cast, the dialectic centers on the problem of significant action. Marat has committed himself to a better world for the masses no matter how much death is involved, and believes his work has self-evident consequence. Against this, the Marquis poses "the indifference of nature" and the sad doubts of extreme solipsism. In his best speech, he speaks of how, when in prison, when he felt all slipping away into an uninterested transitoriness, he dreamed of the body's orifices as refuges into which one could hook and twine oneself as all else rushed toward oblivion.

For the most part, however, it is Marat who has the incisive turns of phrase. He may not have logic on his side, but he does have a better stage rhetoric. In his speech headed, "These Lies They Tell," he actually has a Broadway audience cheering when he comes to the lines:

> Even if there's no poverty to be seen
> because the poverty's been hidden
> even if you ever got more wages
> and could afford to buy
> more of these new and useless goods
> which these new industries foist on you
> and even if it seems to you
> that you never had so much
> that is only the slogan of those
> who still have much more than you

Today, Sade's moral skepticism is less interesting in the stating than in the consequences, and even Total Theater *cum* Cruelty is not ready theatrically to follow Sade to his literary conclusions. I am told that Weiss, who recently took up East German citizenship, considers the East Berlin production of his play superior to all the others because it tips the scales heavily in favor of Marat's position. Given the balance Weiss has set up, I can hardly see how any production could do otherwise. Sade's points are philosophical; Marat's rhetorical; and we can go back to Socrates to see who wins that duel.

BEHIND and around this confrontation mill the lunatics of Charenton. One plays Charlotte Corday, Marat's assassin; another, an erotomaniac—sporting, for this production, an erection with a small seminal stain at its tip—portrays Charlotte's lover, Duperret. Every now and then, someone else jumps forward for an impromptu turn and is wrestled off again by the warders. There are songs in Brechtian style about Marat and the Revolution sung by a straitjacketed trio and a former prostitute, and cacophonous choruses by the whole ensemble, ending in a grisly militant march of the insane toward the audience of the play-within-the-play (Coulmier, director of the asylum, his wife and daughter) and the larger audience of the play itself.

No one can deny that watching two dozen or so skillfully individualized lunatics drift about a stage, trying to adapt themselves to the exigencies of political drama is harrowing and fascinating. Peter Brook, the director, has artfully seen to it that not a corner of his platform goes to waste, and wherever the eye gazes, a whole history of horror is waiting for it. Behind the dialogue there is always the threatening murmur of derangement, the convulsive twitches of madness. In such a setting, every didactic word uttered is charged with some form of drama. Is it apposite? Could not a Marxist have a dark night of the soul and engage himself with questions by placing his characters in barber's chairs? Isn't it spurious to stage, in effect, a Roman circus to pump some life into a dry argument? These objections can be raised against *Marat/Sade,* but they seem to me of small consequence. The purpose of a didactic play is to obtain interest, and there is no reason why this should not be done, if it can, through setting and stagecraft. Granted the work is not so completely satisfying as it would have been had madness and its asylum been more pertinent to Weiss's subject, but I would not object to a playwright arranging automobile accidents on stage if he could get his audience to listen to him.

FINALLY, however, the interest captured, the writer had best be ready with something pointed to say. Weiss may be occasionally faulty in presenting such a large area of argument, but there is no doubt that one is watching the product of an intelligent mind. (An intelligent mind! The unicorn of the theater!) It may seem that in the era of the Ecumenical Church, diatribes against the clergy are out of style. It may seem that in a socialist world, revolutionary speeches of Jacobin tint are no longer apt. It may seem that in a society constantly worried and fretful about peace, philippics against war are old hat. I agree with Weiss. Not yet.

This is the second of JACK RICHARDSON's *regular theater columns. In our November 1965 issue he reviewed the Lincoln Center production of* Danton's Death.

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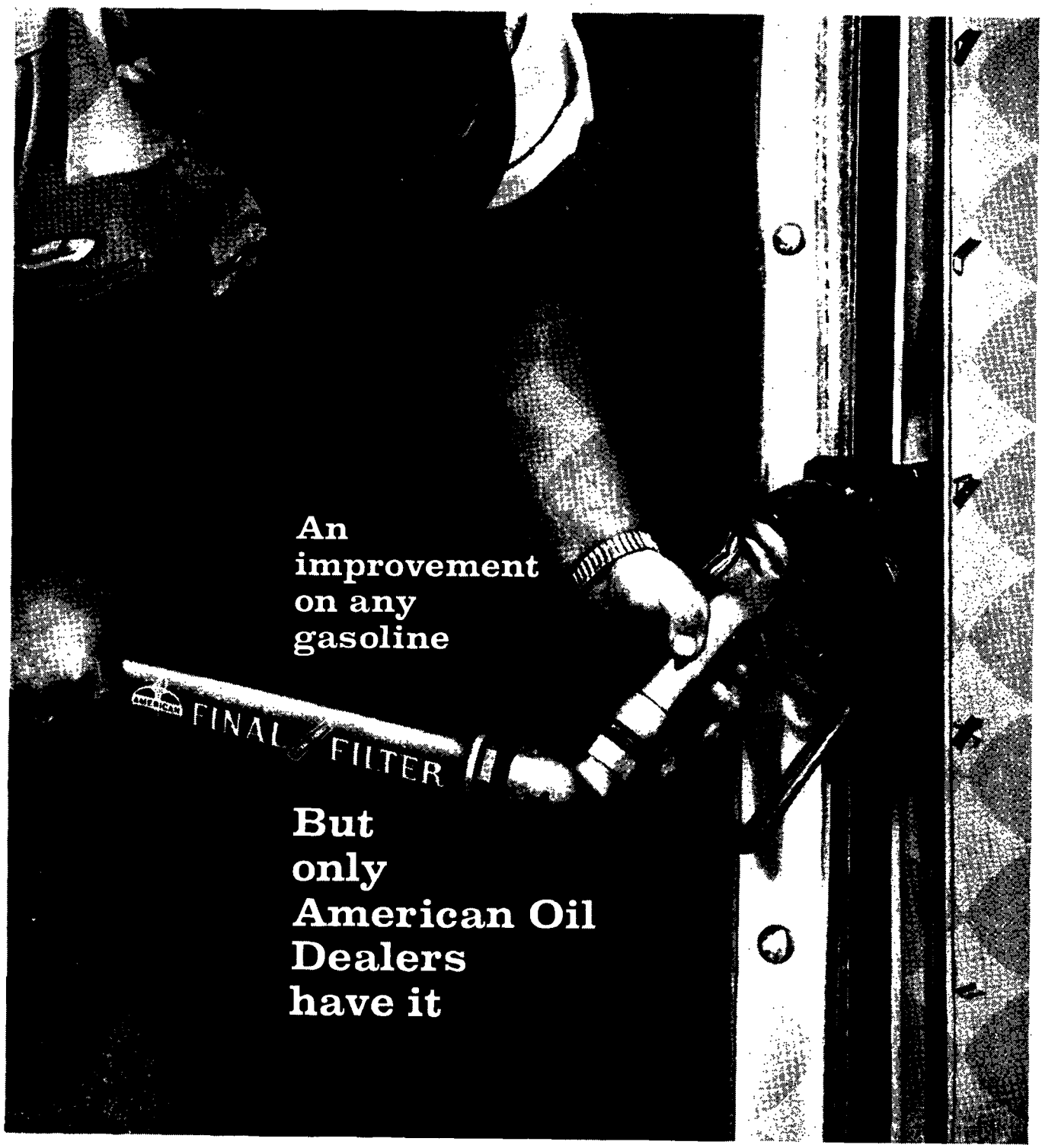

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THE OTHER SINGER

Irving Howe

THERE are two Singers in Yiddish literature and while both are very good, they sing in different keys. The elder brother, Israel Joshua Singer, who died in 1944 and whose books are now gradually being reissued in English translation, was one of the few genuine novelists to write in Yiddish: a genuine novelist as distinct from a writer of short or medium-sized prose fiction. The younger brother, known as Isaac Bashevis Singer in English and more conveniently as Isaac Bashevis in Yiddish, is most accomplished as a writer of short stories blending grotesque and folk motifs ("Gimpel the Fool," etc.), though he has also tried his hand at the full-scale novel.

Each of the Singers has won an American following, at different cultural moments and for strikingly different reasons. When the elder Singer was first published in English translation during the 30's, his books—most notably, *The Brothers Ashkenazi*—gained an enormous popular success, appealing as they did to readers who enjoy the kind of thick and leisurely social novel that dominated European literature at the turn of the century. Intent upon portraying the historical changes and social relationships of East-European Jewish life as these became visible in cities like Warsaw rather than in the traditional *shtetl*—since the *shtetl*, after all, was too confining a locale for the novel—I. J. Singer built his work upon spacious architectural principles, composing in the manner we associate with the early Mann, Jules Romains, and Roger Martin du Gard. He mastered, as few Yiddish writers have, the problems of construction special to the "family novel," such as the management of multiple layers of plot and the bringing together of a large span of novelistic time with at least occasional moments of intensity. He learned to see modern society as a complex organism with a life of its own, a destiny superseding, and sometimes cancelling out, the will of its individual members. Thirty years ago these qualities were attractive to readers of fiction, including those who thought of it as a serious art; today I. J. Singer's work may appear a bit old-fashioned to young people brought up on Faulkner, Camus, and Genet.

Such young people form the very public that has been most enthusiastic about Isaac Bashevis Singer, a public composed of third-generation and semi-assimilated Jews, as well as some gentile fellow-travelers, whose nostalgia or curiosity about Jewishness is decidedly limited but who find in the author of *Satan in Goray* and *The Magician of Lublin* a congenial voice. He brings together esoteric Judaica, which requires no commitment from the reader, and a sophisticated modern tone, which allows for immediate recognition; and this mixture speaks to highbrow readers as no other Yiddish writer, and few American writers, can. These are readers who accept as necessary or even desirable the disintegration of the traditional novel and regard it as emblematic of a larger cultural disintegration; they have become, or been taught to be, impatient with books like *The Old Wives' Tale* or *The Thibaults* or *Buddenbrooks*. I have argued elsewhere that a certain misunderstanding is at work here between American readers and Yiddish writers which, for obvious reasons, neither takes pains to remove. For while the admirers of I. B. Singer are right in feeling that he is closer to them than any other Yiddish writer they are likely to encounter—closer in his quizzical tone, his fondness for extreme states of being, his spiritual restlessness, perhaps even perversity—the truth is, I think, that he is not quite the "swinger," not quite the delightfully abrasive modern voice they suppose him to be.

WE HAVE here, in any case, another example of the notorious instability of literary taste. It would be convenient to foreclose the problem by saying that the elder Singer's popularity is confined to middlebrows and the younger Singer's to highbrows; but that piece of glibness would be an instance of the critical provincialism that takes the form of being splendidly up-to-date. For the truth is that both Singers are gifted and serious writers, and the varying responses to their work have less to do with their intrinsic qualities as writers than with their imaginative relationships to the Jewish tradition. I. J. Singer writes within the orbit of, even though he has begun a withdrawal from, the moral premises—rationalistic and humanistic—of 19th-century Yiddish literature. I. B. Singer has taken the step his older brother could not take; though a master of the Yiddish language, he seems to have cut himself off from the mainstream of Yiddish literature, moving backward to a pre-Enlightenment sensibility and forward to modernism. For the generation of Yiddish readers and writers contemporary with I. J. Singer, to be "modern" meant to abandon the introspective themes and rhythms of *shtetl* writers like Mendele and Reisen, and to bring into Yiddish literature the worldly concerns and narrative sweep of the European novel: what a now-aging generation of Yiddish readers will still praise in Asch, Opatoshu, Schneour, and I. J. Singer as *dos Universal*. Whereas for the American readers of I. B. Singer, a writer regarded with some uneasiness and reserve by the Yiddish public, it is precisely his strangeness, his distance from ethical programs and social concerns, that makes him so attractive. As they say in Yiddish: *geh zei a chochem*!*

Whether directly or not, I. J. Singer absorbed the lesson of Flaubert that the novelist must keep himself strictly out of the events he describes, as if he were an invisible hand in literature somewhat like Adam Smith's in economics. But this assumption was no more congenial to the earlier Yiddish writers, the generation of Mendele, Peretz, and Sholom Aleichem, than *laissez-faire* was to the village economy in which they grew up, for in a sense not true of writers in more sophisticated cultures, the Yiddish writers were—they had to be—*in* their fiction as stage managers, *raisonneurs*, ethical monitors, stand-ins for characters, and prompters for readers. The idea of "aesthetic distance" was, for most of

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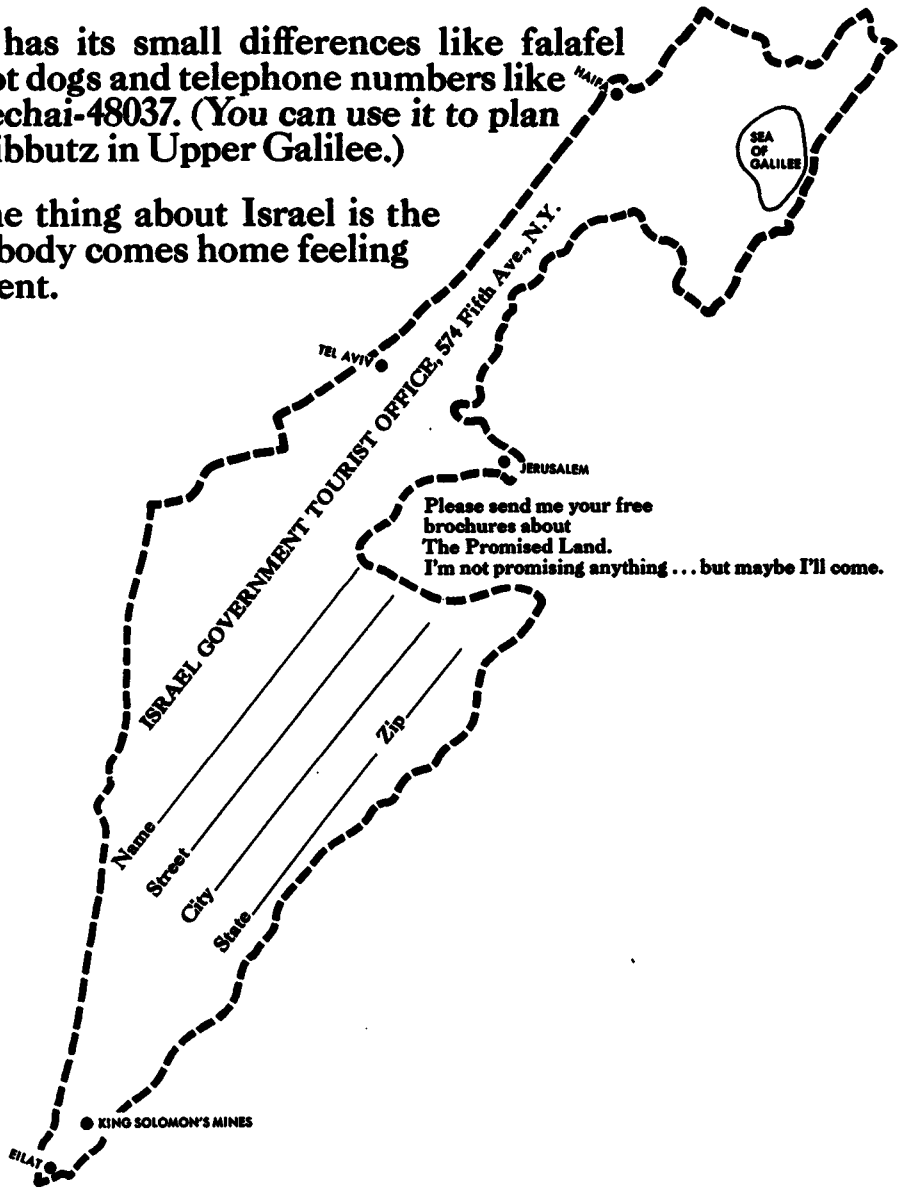

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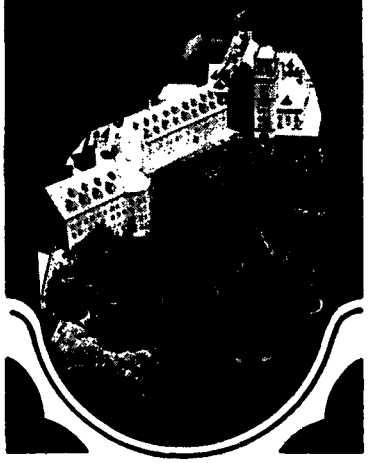

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these late-19th-century Yiddish writers, a luxury neither possible nor desirable; it is an idea that simply makes no sense to a culture which finds itself constantly in peril of destruction.

That, nevertheless, one strongly senses in I. J. Singer's work the kind of detachment—a tactical employment of a subject rather than a cultural submission to it—which is entirely familiar in Western literature, is a sign, among other things, of the gradual secularization of the East-European Jewish world. The Yiddish writers of I. J. Singer's generation tried consciously to find literary models outside their own tradition: they were sick of *shtetl* woes and *shtetl* charms; they wanted a richer and more worldly literature than their immediate predecessors could encourage. One also suspects that the coolness which is I. J. Singer's characteristic note had a more personal source, as the consequence of a temperament somewhat rare in the Yiddish milieu. He was a deeply skeptical writer, not merely in regard to the political and national ideologies raging through the Jewish communities of Poland and Russia during the early years of this century, but also in regard to the whole human enterprise: the possibility of happiness, the relevance of salvation. Though sharing very little in his younger brother's taste for the bizarre and the perverse, he is finally a "tougher" writer, more austere and disenchanted. His sensibility was of a kind one would expect to find in Paris more readily than in Warsaw.

Yoshe Kalb,* now reissued with an introduction by Isaac Bashevis Singer,† is a short novel which hardly can display its author's gift for controlling a complex plot, but which does reveal his characteristic tone of enigmatic, tight-lipped distance. In its own cultural ambience *Yoshe Kalb* is a minor masterpiece, and it should be rewarding to those American readers prepared to make an imaginative leap into a milieu where characters are frozen into a stance of fatality and there is no compensating psychological scrutiny or authorial comment—indeed, no intellectual relief of any kind. The novel presents a picture of corruption in the late-19th-century Jewish world, when Hasidism had degenerated from a spontaneous religious experience into a squalid turmoil of cliques, each with its petty court and charismatic *zaddik*. In this phase of Hasidism, as S. M. Dubnow has written, "The profitable vocation of *zaddik* was made hereditary. There was a multiplication of *zaddik* dynasties contesting for supremacy. The 'cult of the righteous,' as defined by the Ba'al Shem Tov, degenerated into a system of exploitation of the credulous."

THIS background I. J. Singer takes entirely for granted, as a cultural "given" certain to be known to his readers, quite in the way F. Scott Fitzgerald takes for granted the American tone of life in the 20's. The disorders of personal experience comprising the foreground of *Yoshe Kalb* acquire meaning only through their inseparability from the disorders of Jewish communal experience, which are present as the largely invisible foundation of the book.

Its central figure is a timid boy, Nahum, the son of a rationalistic and cultivated rabbi. Nahum is suddenly thrust into the court of the *zaddik*, Rabbi Melech of Nyesheve, a character embodying in himself the coarse vitality of *prost* Jewish life as it found expression through Hasidism. Singer evokes the atmosphere of this petty court—its gabbling clients, its undercurrents of sensuality, its filial intrigue and commercial nastiness—with a marvelous command of detail, marvelous not least of all because he writes without those self-conscious glances at an alien audience which would tempt later Yiddish writers. Coming at a point in the development of Yiddish literature when it was possible for

*Harper & Row, 246 pp., $4.95.

†Though written with brotherly feeling and a quantity of respect I. B. Singer seldom shows to other Yiddish writers, this introduction does not serve the book well. It keeps running off at tangents, one of them concerning the ways in which the Yiddish-speaking Communists tormented I. J. Singer—which may be true but is not of much general interest. For reasons I will discuss later, what the book needs most by way of introduction is a careful historical reconstruction of Hasidism, especially in its phase of decline; and this it does not have.

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him to establish a critical disengagement from its norms while being entirely at home with its materials, I. J. Singer seems in his fiction to reach precisely the point of equilibrium between cultural self-sufficiency and cultural disintegration. It was an equilibrium all the historical forces of our century were conspiring to destroy.

The action of *Yoshe Kalb* proceeds through the marriage of the frightened young Nahum to Rabbi Melech's daughter, a smoldering clump of flesh that yearns wordlessly for womanly sacrifice and sexuality. His daughter out of the way, Rabbi Melech feels free to marry for a third time, choosing as the joy of his old age a shapely and passionate girl named Malkah. Thus two disordered marriages prepare for a climax of disorder generalized. Nahum and Malkah, both strangers to the Hasidic court and both unable to adjust themselves to its energetic vulgarity, turn to one another and end in sin. Neither for the characters nor Singer himself is the reality of sin ever in question, but it is a reality not so much of judgment as of conduct, not so much of a moral choice as of a hastening, almost impersonal sequence of deviation and punishment. The norm of sinfulness may be buried somewhere in the life of the community and in the hearts of the characters, but it is the fact of deviation and punishment that dominates their behavior. As for Singer, who stands apart from both the idea of sin and its immediate consequence, what matters most to him is the experience of inexorability, the grip of event upon event, the way a step once taken shadows the whole of life.

Nahum now sets out as an exile, wandering dumbly—he is called Yoshe the Loon, Yoshe Kalb—through a maze of Jewish villages. He re-enacts, in the second half of the novel, a tragic parody of his original violation. Like a Dantean figure shuffling through the wastes of purgatory, he is a dead soul without will or words, locked forever in his deed. The novel ends with a spectacular struggle between religious sects, disputing for possession of Nahum-Yoshe. A sainted rabbi comes closest to ultimate understanding: "You know not what you do," he cries out to Nahum-Yoshe, "there is no taste in your life or in your deeds, because you are nothing yourself, because—hear me!—you are a dead wanderer in the chaos of the world!"

THE vividness and pressure of this book seem to me beyond dispute, but its meaning beyond certainty. One can wonder at the parabola of Nahum-Yoshe's life but it is hard to grasp the significance, the commanding sense of it that I. J. Singer intended. We could, of course, fall back upon the current notion that literature need not be interpreted, but this notion strikes me as neither appealing nor defensible. Refined and complicated as we may wish to render it, the desire for "meaning" in regard to a work of fiction is inescapable, and we had better adjust our critical theories to the fact.

I would surmise that the power of *Yoshe Kalb* derives from a relationship on I. J. Singer's part to the religious culture of East-European Judaism that is somewhat similar to the relationship Hawthorne is shown to have in *The Scarlet Letter* to the religious culture of New England Puritanism—though the skepticism of Singer is less dialectically clever and more emotionally ominous than Hawthorne's. A fiercely held balance is sustained by Singer between the traditional materials he employs and the attitude of withdrawn objectivity he takes toward them. The world and his vision of the world are allowed equal rights, neither absorbing the other. And the same might be said in regard to the moral norms of the *shtetl* world and Singer's use of those norms in the novel: it hardly matters whether Nahum's act is regarded as sin or social disruption; the consequences are largely the same (though the possibility of regarding this act as social disruption depends, as Singer clearly sees, upon its being, or having been, regarded as a sin by the community).

What finally struck me in reading *Yoshe Kalb* was how tightly locked within the premises of his culture the work of a novelist must be. In *Yoshe Kalb*, every act carries social and moral weight, and no one in the audience to which the

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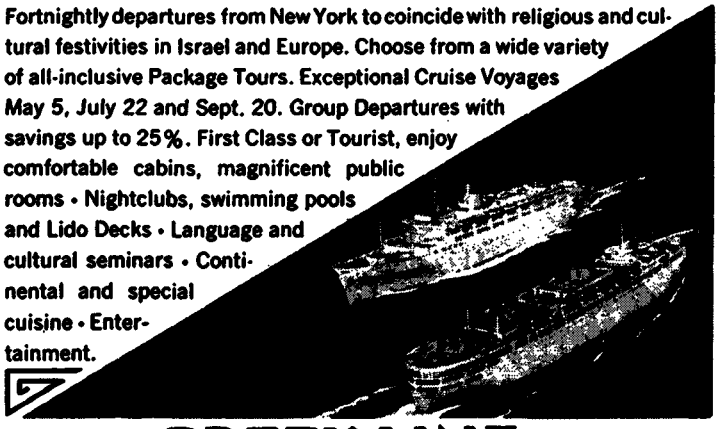
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book was addressed could possibly have doubted what that weight might be. A half-century later we must grope and approximate, fearful that the more ingenious our readings, the more likely that we are smuggling in our own preconceptions. Yet is this not true for all fiction, the very greatest and the most commonplace alike? Try teaching Stendhal to college students in New York, or persuading California students that the moral inquiries of Ivan Karamazov are relevant to their lives, and you will see what I mean.

WHILE writing this article I happened to be reading Mrs. Gaskell's charming short novel *Cousin Phillis*. It would be hard to imagine two works of fiction more dissimilar than *Cousin Phillis* and *Yoshe Kalb*, the one with its rural English setting and Victorian romance, the other with its Jewish intensities. Yet, for all their distance, the two books operate on the same literary principles. Both take for granted their own arc of experience and culture, as if there were nothing else beyond it, no other village, no other values; both assume that, for the attuned reader, conduct rendered with exactness will be transparent and require no gloss; both stake a great deal on the nuances of a language completely shared by characters, writer, and reader. Whatever is hermetic and inaccessible in the one must, finally, be the same in the other. Today the world of *Yoshe Kalb* seems utterly remote; but will not the same be true for *Cousin Phillis* fifty years from now?

What a strange and baffling genre the novel is—a genre from which we have come to demand the profoundest scrutiny and criticism of our experience, yet which is utterly dependent on the turnings of historical change. Painfully conscious as we are these days of how precarious the life of Yiddish literature is, we might profit from the reflection that, in any perspective but that of the immediate moment, it may share the fate of every other literature.

IRVING HOWE's *review*, "Tevye on Broadway," *appeared in our November 1964 issue. Mr. Howe is the editor of* Dissent.

BELSEN REMEMBERED

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

"IT IS BETTER to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," Koheleth advised, but for all his worldliness he did not anticipate that one could go to both simultaneously. The occasion was last November when the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Associations sponsored a dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria to mark the 20th anniversary of Belsen's liberation.

I had worked among the survivors of the Holocaust in the Jewish displaced persons' camp at Belsen in 1947, but for many years now had lost touch with my friends among them. The invitation to dinner (black tie optional, but appropriate) had summoned up dormant memories about who survived and who did not. I decided to go, but mocking my own sentiment, I mocked the incongruity of the occasion. I would go not to feast but to participate in the commemoration and observe the feasting.

Nearly a thousand guests thronged the grand ballroom; a full-sized symphonic orchestra was assembled on the stage; dozens of Jewish notables were installed on a two-tiered dais. Amid the glitter of gowns and the gabble of gossip, beneath a huge trilingual banner exhorting, *Remember*, the speeches began. The survivors themselves spoke in flat and insipid phrases, unable to revive memory. I wanted the relief of silence from the flow of banality, yet chided myself that a fastidiousness for style was Jamesian rather than Jewish. (But later that evening Elie Wiesel, accepting the Belsen Association's first Remembrance Award, for *The Town Beyond the Wall*, spoke of the need for "an accumulation of silence." Job's comforters, Wiesel reminded us, sat with him seven days and seven nights and none spoke a word.)

When Josef Rosensaft, former chairman of the Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the British Zone of Germany, rose to speak, the tedium was replaced by tension. His own unconsumed passion to tell and retell his tale ignited his words. Suddenly, I did not mind his rhetoric, nor even the occasional theatrical effects. At his bidding we rose to remember the dead. As each of us stood in the silence of his memories, the lights dimmed. The ghostly and evocative strains of the *ani ma' amin*, played by the orchestra's muted strings, sounded as if wafted from the other side of this life, perhaps from the mass graves at Belsen.

THE DP camp of Belsen, in the bleak landscape of the sandy Lueneburg heath, was housed in the concrete barracks of a former German Army Panzer Training School, about a mile from the site of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Summer there is brief and cool. In spring and fall the chill and damp penetrate your bones. In winter, I was told, ice formed in the corridors of the barracks.

The flatness of the landscape was relieved here and there by sparsely wooded areas. But I could take no pleasure in them, suspecting every young forest of camouflaging a graveyard. Before 1943, when Belsen became an internment camp for Jews holding foreign citizenship papers who were to be exchanged for German civilians abroad, the Germans had operated it as a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. Whether any Russians left that camp alive, I do not know, but some 50,000 were buried there in terraced mounds, separated by trellises made of birch branches. Birch saplings and young fir trees lined the gravelled paths. One path in the Russian cemetery led to a moss-covered wooden platform on which stood a tall thin cross of birch. A bare wooden sign identified the surrounding mounds of mass graves and wooden crosses as the *Cimitero Italiano*. (How these Italians came to be buried there, I do not know.)

Belsen was altogether a place of graveyards and tombstones. The Jewish graves stood on the site of the concentration camp, under the bare sky, without the protection or concealment of trees. Some mass graves contained a few hundred bodies, others as many as five thousand. In a corner of the field, a handful of monuments marked individual graves—a miniature cemetery set against the anony-

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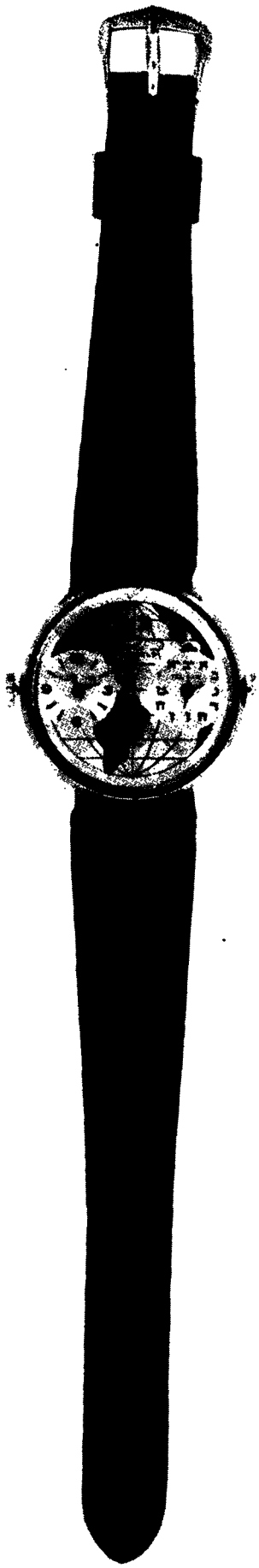
mous vastness of the mass graves. Wherever you stood on this necropolis, you thought you must be treading on corpses. (On the first anniversary of their liberation, the Belsen survivors dedicated a modest monument to the memory of 30,000 Jews murdered in Belsen, the inscription paraphrasing Job: "Earth conceal not the blood shed on thee!")

In 1944, Belsen was turned from an exchange camp into a camp for the sick (in Nazi German doublespeak, a "recovery" camp), and in the last months of the war Bergen-Belsen became a dumping ground for thousands of slave-labor survivors from Auschwitz and other camps that the Germans had begun to dismantle and destroy before the Allied armies came upon them. Besides prisoners, Belsen inherited from Auschwitz *Hauptsturmfuehrer* Josef Kramer, who became top officer, and a complement of other Auschwitz officials.

On April 15, 1945, when the 11th Armored Division of the British Second Army entered Bergen-Belsen, they came upon 40,000 sick, starving, and dying prisoners (25,000 women), mostly Polish and Hungarian Jews, and 10,000 corpses stacked in high heaps. To be sure, in the hierarchy of horror, Belsen had ranked low. Auschwitz, Belzec, Chelmno, Lublin (Majdanek), Sobibor, Treblinka—these were the great killing centers, where the Germans innovated and perfected the technology of mass murder. But the British had their first direct encounter with death camps at Belsen and their shock made Belsen a byword for terror. The *Times* correspondent began his story: "It is my duty to describe something beyond the imagination of mankind."

Typhoid, typhus, tuberculosis, dysentery spread. In the first four weeks after liberation, another 13,000 died. The British senior medical officer set up an emergency hospital in the officers' hostel of the Panzer Training School, from which the Wehrmacht had fled. The less critically ill were evacuated to the training school's concrete barracks. Under British supervision, the German and Hungarian SS began to collect the corpses.



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When the remains were buried in mass pits, the camp huts and the SS installations were razed. At the entrance to the desolate waste, the British erected two signboards, in German and English:

This is the site of
THE INFAMOUS BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP
Liberated by the British on April 15, 1945.
10000 unburied dead were found here,
Another 13000 have since died.
All of them victims of the
German New Order in Europe
And an example of Nazi Kultur.

(Those signs no longer stand, but in 1947 they were included in the standard necrological tour on which we took visiting dignitaries.)

As soon as they could, Western Jews returned to their countries; non-Jews were moved to another camp. The East-European Jews, declining repatriation, remained—awaiting visas, passports, certificates, exit permits from infernal Europe. The British, meanwhile, wanted the Panzer barracks for their soldiers and prepared to evacuate the Jews to a camp at Lingen, near the Dutch border. But they had reckoned without Josef Rosensaft.

ROSENSAFT had arrived in Belsen just a week before the British, in a contingent of 4,000 slave laborers from Dora. Born in Bedzin, Poland, in 1911, he was raised in a traditional Jewish family. Before the war he led an ordinary life, buying and selling scrap-metal. Deported in June 1943, he jumped from the transport and escaped, only to be caught two months later and sent to Auschwitz. Assigned to a labor camp nearby, he escaped once more in May 1944, while working on the outside. He returned to Bedzin and hid for a time with a non-Jewish family, but the Auschwitz number tattooed on his arm soon gave him away. After months of torture (the Germans suspected he had accomplices) and solitary confinement in Auschwitz, he was sent to Dora as a slave laborer.

A small, wiry man, infinitely resourceful and unpredictably daring, Rosensaft, having survived the Third Reich, could scarcely be intimidated by the British. He found the quarters at Lingen without water, without light, unfit for human habitation. Defying British military orders, he sent the first transport of Jewish evacuees back to the Belsen barracks and prevented the second from setting out. That was how the Jewish DP camp at Belsen began.

The next battle with the British was over names. The British, sharing the Panzer barracks with the Jewish survivors, identified the camp by the name of the nearest town, Hohne; Britons at home, the army explained, became agitated on learning that their soldiers were stationed at Belsen. But determined to keep the remembrance of Belsen alive (a name, he says, to make you tremble), Rosensaft persisted and, persisting, prevailed.

Under Rosensaft's direction, Belsen became a self-governing community of about 10,000 Jews who were waiting for exit papers. The first thing to be set up was the tracing service to seek out family among survivors all over Europe and relatives all over the world. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee began to send in supplies to supplement British army rations. People began to get married and babies to be born. Rabbis, *mohalim, shohatim* plied their trades. Jewish police kept order and Jewish judges held court. Children went to Talmud Torahs and secular schools; adults attended vocational classes. A hand-printed newspaper began to appear; a drama studio was formed; a library was set up. From Aguda to Revisionists, Jewish parties competed for representation on the Central Committee.

BELSEN became, as Rosensaft puts it, a *shtetl*. Perhaps it was—the last *shtetl* in Europe, whose inhabitants, teeter-tottering between despair and exhilaration, were suspended between past and future. Their memories pursued them, waking or dreaming. Once I met a friend in the camp, his hands freshly bandaged: literally leaping out of a nightmare, he had gone through the window. (Until today, Rosensaft tells me, many survivors prefer street-level apartments because of such recurrent dreams.) Public events were occasions for processions to the cemetery, and the Deuteronomic text "Remember what Amalek did unto thee" became a commonplace. Belsen also had its manic side—mass meetings and vociferous demonstrations, almost always on behalf of a Jewish state, and there was dancing in Belsen's Freedom Square on that Saturday night, November 29, 1947, when the UN voted to partition Palestine.

Not all Belseners went to the new Jewish state; many, even fervent Zionists, chose the United States or Canada. In 1950, Belsen closed down, its residents scattered throughout the new English-speaking Diaspora. But Belsen ties still bind them. Here, in Canada, and in Israel, Belsen associations have become new-style *landsmanshaftn*, and at their anniversary meetings, Belseners display their prosperity and boast of their children's accomplishments.

Rosensaft has prospered most of all, and he continues in his paternalistic concern for the dispersed Belsen community. His obsession to keep the memory of Belsen alive

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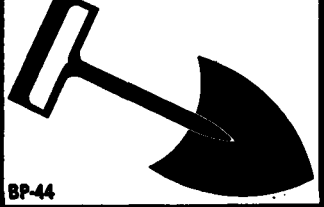

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endures. He has become our Ancient Mariner, who passes, "like night, from land to land," with "strange power of speech" to tell his tale to whomsoever will listen.

He has the means to indulge his obsession. He organizes annual pilgrimages to the Belsen site and arranges ceremonies of remembrance in New York, London, Montreal, and Israel. He has seen to the erection of a Belsen tablet on Jerusalem's Mount Zion, and he watches over the mass graves at Belsen. He has established scholarship and loan funds for Belsen survivors, Belsen memorial libraries in Tel Aviv and New York, and now an annual Remembrance Award for a work of literature, art, music, or research on the Nazi terror. He has subsidized the publication of commemorative books. The latest is a lavishly produced, outsized, 471-page trilingual volume, *Holocaust and Rebirth: Bergen-Belsen 1945-1965.**

He has sponsored the commemorative dinners (last November's was the splashiest, at $25 a plate), inviting as his guests non-Belsen writers, journalists, scholars, communal leaders, philanthropists, and rabbis. Through them he has tried to involve the whole Jewish community in the memory of Belsen and, against all odds and despite the incongruity of the setting, he has somehow succeeded. The Belsen commemoration I attended was not only a private Belsen affair. Briefly, fleetingly, it became a communal service of remembrance, a fragile moment in which we all remembered together.

AN ANCIENT Jewish legend has it that when God spoke at Sinai, revealing the Torah, all Israel was present, the living and the dead and those not yet born, so that every Jew in the course of history has had his personal share of the revelation. The Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein updated this legend in his poem *Nisht di meysim loybn gott* ("The dead praise not the Lord," an allusion to Psalm 115), when he ascribed to all Israel a share also in the Holocaust:

> We received the Torah at Sinai
> and in Lublin we gave it back.
> The dead praise not the Lord,
> The Torah was given for living.
> And so together as all of us
> stood together at the Giving of
> the Torah
> So verily, we all died in Lublin.

And, indeed, nowhere in the world, I think, is there a Jew alive today who, if he ponders at all the fact that he is a Jew alive today, has not had his own apocalyptic encounter with the Holocaust. But we keep our share in the catastrophe private and intimate; we do not acknowledge it collectively. We have no set date to observe, no prayer to recite.

Having no religious or communal authority to decide such matters, those who commemorate the Holocaust are, like those Biblical men of war taking booty, every man for himself. Even Rosensaft, who explains his preoccupation with his institutions of remembrance as the surrogates of traditional mourning—kaddish and *yortsayt*—does not keep a fixed date for Belsen commemorative events. For some, April 19, the start of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, has become the date to remember. The Israeli Knesset decreed the 27th of Nisan as Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day to commemorate "the disaster which the Nazis and their collaborators brought upon the Jewish people and . . . the acts of heroism and revolt performed in those days," but few American Jews know about, let alone observe, it. We have no prayer for the occasion, not even a liturgical poem. In the old days the liturgy accommodated itself to national disasters, assimilating into the service laments and supplicatory poems. But no one writes liturgical poetry nowadays and the trend is toward cutting services, not adding to them.

Consequently, I thank Josef Rosensaft for having given me a public occasion to remember. I came thinking to mock; I left wanting to remember and wanting nothing else but that we all remember.

* Edited by Sam E. Bloch, published by the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors, $25.00.

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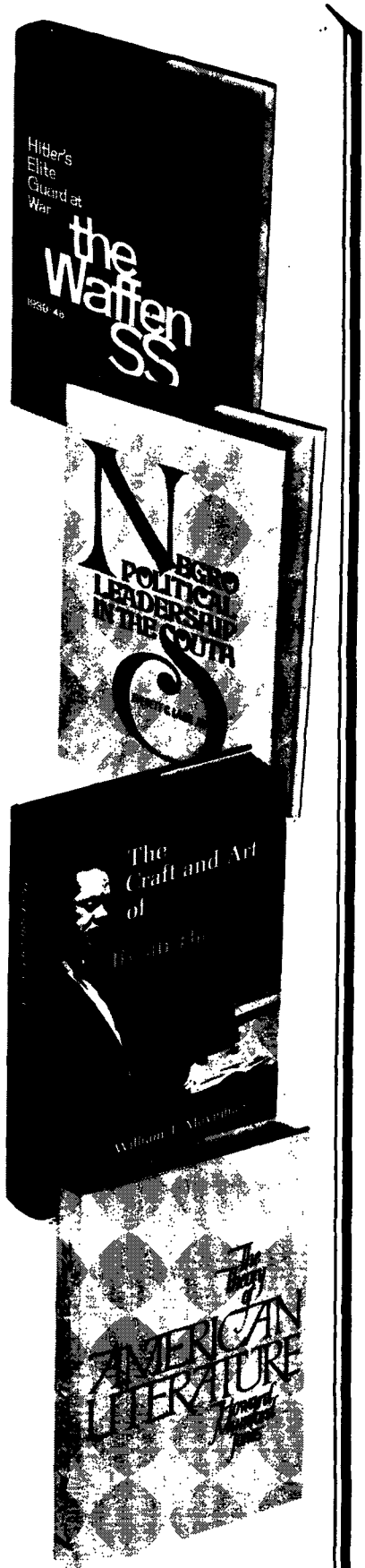
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BEYOND WHOSE CULTURE?

BEYOND CULTURE. By LIONEL TRILLING. *Viking Press. 233 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by DAN JACOBSON

WITH *The Liberal Imagination* Lionel Trilling established himself as one of the two or three most important literary critics in the United States. The book did full justice to both the terms of its title, being truly liberal and imaginative in its insights, and hence veracious and passionate as well. I can remember the excitement with which I read it when it first came out, and the gratitude I felt toward its author; to reread the book today, fifteen years after its publication, is still a heartening experience. Naturally, I have more hesitations and qualifications about some of the essays than I did when I first read them (partly because I have argued with them so often in my mind since then); but overall the collection seems to me to exemplify the "moral realism" which it put forward as its own standard of judgment.

In comparison, Trilling's two subsequent critical collections, *The Opposing Self* and *A Gathering of Fugitives,* were disappointing, despite some excellent passages in both. In reading them one too often had the feeling that instead of listening to a man speaking his mind, as one had in *The Liberal Imagination*—or to a younger man testing out the power of his mind, as in his earlier studies of Matthew Arnold and E. M. Forster—one was listening to something quite different, and less interesting: to a spokesman.

But a spokesman for what? Trilling himself did not seem to know. The ideological issues which had provided the occasion for *The Liberal Imagination* (though they had not defined its achievement) had deserted him, had ceased to be of interest. So, instead, in *A Gathering of Fugitives* he appeared to be speaking for a tradition of relaxed, cultivated, gentlemanly bookmanship, a role which suited him so little that the more informal he tried to become, the more strained the reader was made to feel. On the other hand, in *The Opposing Self* he was a spokesman for a self-consciously tense, exhausting conception of "modernity"—for the belief, as he put it, that "to many of us the world today has the look and feel of a Dostoevsky novel, every moment of it crisis, every detail of it the projection of exacerbated sensibility and blind, wounded will." The two roles contradicted each other at every turn, which was worrying in itself; and neither as slippered bookman nor as exacerbated modern sensibility could Trilling put by his spokesman's manners, his stylistic affectations, pomposities, and indirections.

These are still very much with him, in his new collection, *Beyond Culture.* The book is distractingly crowded with lofty phrases, otiose qualifications, would-be stately adjectives. Opening it quite at random, I found the following, about Jane Austen's Emma:

> We cannot be slow to see what is the basis of this energy and style and intelligence. It is self-love. There is a great power of charm in self-love, although, to be sure, the charm is an ambiguous one. We resent it and resist it, yet we are drawn by it, if only it goes with a little grace or creative power. Nothing is easier to pardon than the mistakes and excesses of self-love: if we are quick to condemn them, we take pleasure in forgiving them. And with good reason, for they are the extravagance of the first of the virtues, the most basic and biological of the virtues, that of self-preservation.

One notices the plethora of abstractions (energy, style, intelligence, grace, charm, extravagance, power, power again); the self-indulgent alliterations ("resent and resist"; "basic and biological"); one wonders why, if "we cannot be slow" in the first line, "we" are positively "quick" a little later, and why "our" speeds should matter so much, anyway. The fussiness of the prose merely shows up the dubiousness of the psychological generalizations embedded in it; and all in all, by the end of the paragraph one feels oneself to be a long, long way from Emma, and hardly any closer to Trilling.

Now in discussing the style of the book in this way, I am illustrating a tendency of "our culture" which Trilling himself attacks directly in *Beyond Culture.* "It is," he says, "the mark of the culturally sensitive critic to concentrate upon manner and tone and to express his judgment upon these in a mode that reaches, as it is intended to reach, the point of personal inculpation." It is a mode, in Trilling's opinion, to which we have become addicted, to the point where, as with any other addiction, it befuddles our brains and corrupts our feelings:

> The criterion of style, the examination of life by aesthetic categories, yields judgments of a subtle and profound kind, of compelling force. Such judgments are the stuff of the great classic literature of the modern world. Yeats and Eliot, Lawrence and Joyce, each in his own way, have instructed us how to make these judgments for ourselves, teaching us that there is nothing within that passeth show, that whatever is within of grace or lack of grace will manifest itself in the timbre of the voice, the rhythm of the speech, in how the foot meets the ground, in the feel of the chosen cloth, in the fashion of the house inhabited. By such things we learn to know our neighbor; they yield a knowledge that transcends the knowledge of mere actions.

The great modern writers originally "instructed" us in this mode of judgment—the "cultural mode,"

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Trilling calls it—because they believed it to be a way of liberating themselves and their readers, because they had the "clear purpose of detaching the reader from the habits of thought and feeling that the larger culture imposes, of giving him a ground and vantage point from which to judge and condemn, and perhaps revise, the culture which produced him." Their intention was militantly subversive, "adversary," revolutionary, destructive; their subject was "damnation and salvation," and they insisted that we would not be saved unless we were ready to make over ourselves and our society.

But, the argument continues, forty or fifty years later there has grown around the art and literature of the modern period an "adversary culture" or "second environment," the members of which like to see themselves, in the heroic manner of the writers they so much admire, in lonely opposition to the dominant commercial-philistine culture. But in fact these people belong to a rather cosy, well-established, self-protective community, and have their own pieties and received opinions, their excessive, shared dependence on the virtues of the "moralized taste" described above, their own wealthy, privileged institutions—the chief of these being the universities. Instead of asking of what they read, "Is it true? Is it true for me?," they ask, "Is it true? Is it true for us?" (This, Trilling adds, "is a good question, too, it has its particular social virtues, but it does not yield the same results as the first question, and it may even make it harder to ask the first question.") By its very existence, through its systems of rewards and penalties, its reliance on its own "great new transcendent gossip" which examines ideas only as indices of personal "grace" or the absence of grace, through those classroom situations which inevitably encourage glib, categorizing responses among teachers and students alike, the "second environment" trivializes and emasculates the art from which it claims to be drawing its sanctions. Indeed, in its passionate concern with "style," the "second environment" suggests as clearly as the larger environment how dominant over us all is "the wonderful and terrible art of advertising"; there is less difference than we suppose between people who define themselves by their commitment to an idea of morality, politics, or literature, and people who define themselves by wearing trousers with or without pleats. For all these reasons, the time has come, or soon will come, when we must ask ourselves whether "in our culture the study of literature is any longer a suitable means for developing and refining the intelligence."

Beyond Culture is a collection of essays on different subjects written at different times. But the argument I have summarized is followed pretty persistently through it; and it is perhaps a measure of how much Trilling's style has got in his way that perceptive reviewers have accused him, on the basis of that argument, of trying to restore an old "gentility" or establish a new one. This seems to me about as far as one can get from his intention. In *Beyond Culture* he is trying to be quite as seditious and upsetting as the literary heroes of whom he writes. There is a kind of frustrated courage and despair in the book which one must respect. In it, a critic of literature is trying to wean the reader from an exaggerated respect for literature, and from too great a dependence on it for his picture of the world and his image of himself; a teacher is publicly questioning the value of what he teaches; a critic of culture is asking us to abandon, for the sake of our intellectual health, too great a faith in the idea of culture. But if one asks why the courage and despair are frustrated, one's first, hard answer is likely to be that—despite his learning and the brilliance of his intellect, and despite an achievement which one might suppose had given him, of all people, a secure and independent "vantage point"—Trilling himself is too much a part of the "second environment" he deplores to be able to describe accurately what is important about it and what isn't, or even to speak with any real force and conviction against those aspects of it which make him most unhappy.

Is that just another offensively

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personal gesture of inculpation? I shall try to answer the question directly in a slightly different context later. But a part of the answer to it must lie in the examples that can be given of how Trilling's arguments are affected and nullified by the terms in which he presents them. And the first example which comes to mind is simply the surprise that Trilling seems to show at his discovery of how pernicious some of the features of such a "second environment" can be. After all, the evidence for it has been available for many years—among other places in the work of those very writers whom he holds up to us for admiration. Trilling speaks much of their attempts to free themselves and their readers from the surrounding middle-class culture; but he does not mention that they also attempted, quite as vigorously, to free themselves from the social groups and institutions which might have formed a comparable "second environment" of their day, and which they saw as a menace to themselves and their work. One thinks in this connection of D. H. Lawrence and his notoriously hostile reaction to Bloomsbury and Cambridge, and of his portraits of people from these milieus in so many of his stories; when Trilling quotes Thomas Mann to the effect that his work was a lifelong effort to free himself from the middle class, one remembers that it was that same Mann who, describing himself as an artist among the bourgeoisie, took care to add that he was a bourgeois among the artists.

Still, Trilling's surprise at his discovery is perhaps more understandable than the nervousness with which he announces it: a nervousness which is shown most strikingly in what he says about some of his students at Columbia. Describing their glib reaction to the course he gives in modern literature, their "talkative" and "attitudinizing" way of manipulating "accepted formulations about anxiety and urban society and alienation," he says that listening to them he sometimes yearns for "some sign of resistance and imperviousness, of personal density or gravity"; he thinks longingly of "young minds, and maturing minds, which

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are free of cant." Fair enough: one knows what he wants, or one hopes one knows, and one sympathizes with it. Or rather, one would sympathize with it, did Trilling not apologize for this yearning. He apologizes again and again; he calls it "defensive, eccentric, self-depreciatory . . . obscurantist and reactionary." Does he really believe it to be any of these? Does he really believe—which is perhaps more to the point—that the opinions of people who would find it so are worth bothering about? Apparently he does; and we can only be sorry to see it.

Related to the above point, and equally troubling, is the honorific language Trilling uses to talk about some of the cheapest manifestations of his "second environment"; one would never guess from his way of describing them that he is dealing with matters which are indeed no more important than the cut of a pair of trousers. Thus there is the reference quoted above to the "great new transcendent" realm of literary and artistic gossip. What's so great about it, one wants to know? The fact that some form of it is likely to appear eventually in *Esquire* or *Partisan Review*, or the London *Observer* or *Sunday Times*? What's transcendent about it? Or new? Hasn't gossip of every kind always demeaned its objects or victims in a moralistic and self-serving way? Again, while the word "fashion" is avoided in the book, the word "fad" does occur, just once—and about it Trilling adds immediately, "It is necessary to recognize the part a mode or fad may play in the history of culture." Is it? *The Liberal Imagination* was about the history of culture, but it seemed to me to be after bigger game than modes or fads or fashions. And the same is true of the best essay in *Beyond Culture*, entitled "The Fate of Pleasure," in which Trilling suggests that while in our politics we are still committed to a fairly straightforward notion of pleasure and gratification, in literature we set a much higher value on the spiritual status of "unpleasure," and that this split-mindedness should be recognized and grappled with. Some of the conjunctions made in the essay seem rather frail in comparison with the weight of argument they have to bear; nevertheless, he deals here with large issues in the way they deserve, instead of merely inflating small ones. Even the phrase about "the wonderful and terrible art of advertising" seems to me inflationary; so does his reference elsewhere to the "authority" of "the class of New York intellectuals."

By contrast, one can't help noticing that when Trilling is confronted by something other than the "vivacity" and "assiduity" of the New York literary world, he is distinctly uncomfortable with it. Thus he describes the "tone" of Dr. Leavis's ferocious attack on C. P. Snow as "a bad tone, an impermissible tone." Who, one wonders, issues the permits? That New York "authority"? And he rebukes Saul Bellow for the public nature of the platform he chose from which to attack the received literary doctrine that modern society can be dismissed as a wasteland.

> One could wish that Mr. Bellow had chosen a different occasion for a statement which offered so violent an affront to a view which . . . has acquired great authority . . . it would have been better had he invited not merely the assent of a public gathering but the considered discourse of those colleagues to whom his remarks are of most immediate concern.

Not in front of the *others*, perhaps?

All these, I may say, seem to me matters of substance, not just manner. It is a matter of substance, too, that of the essays in the book which deal with particular writers of fiction (Jane Austen, Hawthorne, and Isaac Babel), two are devoted largely to a discussion of what literary historians, other critics or novelists, readers at large—the "second environment" if you wish—have made of these authors in the past. What Trilling makes of them in the present is approached only at the end, in the most circuitous fashion. (The essay on Babel, of which this is not true, is much the best of the group—hardly surprisingly.) It is also a matter of substance that Trilling, while deploring the "cultural mode of discourse," fails to make any serious attempt to offer an alternative to it. He invokes in one or two places "the faculty of mind" and "the rational intellect," and that is that, as much as we get in the way of guidance, in the offer of alternatives. It isn't enough.

It is impossible for any admirer of Trilling's earlier work to read *Beyond Culture* in this way, to see him so deeply and unhappily implicated in what he is trying to attack, without wondering why he should have been unable to maintain the independent critical ground he had once seemed to possess so firmly. The question can be answered, I think, only by examining more closely than I have yet done the nature of the success he achieved in *The Liberal Imagination*. That success, plainly, was as much political as literary. *The Liberal Imagination* came out in the relatively early years of the Cold War; and its polemical intention was directed against all the simplifications and distortions of mind and feeling which were the legacy of a generation's infatuation with Communism, or with the facile, progressive pieties that the Stalinists and their fellow-travelers had turned for so long to their own advantage. Whether in talking about Tacitus's *Annals*, Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*, or Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, Trilling was attacking those beliefs and habits of mind which, while purporting to seek after a larger future for humankind, had in fact prescribed a shallow view of "reality," had expressed a profound hatred of human variety, and had slighted the fullness of the present in favor of an ever-receding future. In their particular field these essays seem to me unsurpassed, not just by Trilling himself, but within the whole range of modern literary criticism: their delicacy, strength, and depth of political engagement make them a model of how to discern the hidden ideological implications of literary works and attitudes, and the literary consequences of political programs and admirations.

But the Cold War, our entire political situation, has greatly changed its character since then; it has become both much less dramatic and much more confused. I

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would hesitate to say that the present state of affairs is in fact less "ideological" than the situation of fifteen years ago, especially in view of the near-continuous revolution that is taking place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; yet nationally and internationally I think the feeling is widespread that the processes which are now carrying us along have yet truly to articulate themselves—or are perhaps beyond articulation. I am not suggesting that had things been otherwise Trilling would have been content to do again what he had already done; still less am I putting him down as a Cold Warrior. Nevertheless, it does seem that the intellectually inchoate political character of the present time is one in which his best literary and polemical gifts have been forced to remain idle. So much does this seem to me to be the case, that I cannot avoid interpreting his pleas for rationality and the faculty of mind as a plea, in part, for a return to a politics in which ideas are more visible, more discussable, more "treatable" (as Henry James might say) than they are today.

But the world does not oblige. It is not surprising then that, *faute de mieux*, Trilling should suggest repeatedly in the present book that "culture" has become our politics. For instance, he says that in America today issues of politics are often "but a mask" for issues of culture; he says of the whole Western world that "increasingly people find it possible to escape from the old categories of class and come together in categories of taste"; he speaks explicitly of art having become an "ideology," along with sex, violence, and madness. But how little store he really sets by this suggested equivalence he reveals, almost with an air of inadvertence, in a remark he makes about the very people whom he believes to be most deeply committed to art and to "the cultural mode of discourse":

> This second environment must always have some ethical or spiritual advantage over the first, if only because . . . it will never have the actual rule of the world; if its personnel sometimes dream of rule, it yet knows that

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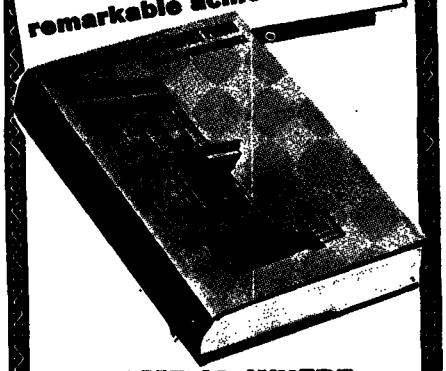

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it would soon become bored by the dreary routine that rulers must submit to: the blame for the ugly actualities will therefore always rest on Philistine shoulders.

But if that is the attitude of the members of the "second environment" toward actual rule of the world, then in what sense, other than the most obscurely metaphorical, can one talk of them as being committed to an "ideology"? Or of culture having become their politics? Ideologies are precisely plans for the seizure and disposition of power; the "blame" of ruling is what ideologists seek; rule of the state, or the world, is what politics must always be about, if the word is to retain any meaning at all.*

One sees that Trilling has tried to make a transposition, as it were, between today's "second environment" and a previous generation's progressive politics. In both cases he is trying to force open minds which he believes to have become all the more firmly closed because of their own assurance that they are the best, the most enlightened and independent of minds. But the transposition does not work; it cannot work; it becomes instead a trap for Trilling himself. In writing about the fate of the progressive political impulse of the first half of this century, he was writing about a great issue, about what one is sure will remain a permanent issue in our history and culture. But in writing about the "second environment" he is writing about . . . the second environment. About fashion, about style, about academic frustrations, about gossip, about the New York intellectuals, about advertising. His attempts to elevate the importance of his subject matter must inevitably fall back on himself.

We are left ultimately with little more than the undoubted and dispiriting truth that there are many academics, writers, and literary intellectuals, some of them in positions of considerable influence, who flatter themselves that they are showing great independence of mind when they are merely repeating received ideas; who see a high-minded abnegation of the world in what are really gestures of self-love and self-advancement; who believe "good taste" to be indistinguishable from moral worth; and who imagine that both are displayed by the adoption of particular, fashionable attitudes toward political, social, and artistic events. But it seems to me defeatist indeed to suggest that these people have pre-empted all the available literary and intellectual space; and that the choice before us is really that of either joining their numbers or of ceasing to believe that the great modern writers can still give pleasure, refine the mind, and help us to understand where we are. I feel this all the more strongly because I am convinced that Trilling's description of these writers' work, of "the stuff of their judgments," is far more an expression of his own current preoccupations than a true reflection of what they accomplished. It is to them, still, I believe that we can look for the fullest, most truthful accounts of lived experience comparable to our own.

WHICH isn't to suggest that much of what they say is not to be treated with skepticism and distrust; they invite these attitudes often enough. In this connection I should add that I am not happy with either of the questions Trilling suggests we might ask of a literary work. ("Is it true for me?" or "Is it true for us?") If we are to ask any question in that form, it would surely be more useful to ask, "Is it true for *him*?—for the man who has written this poem, or story, or critical essay. At what level is it true for him? How much of himself has he committed to the truth he is trying to present?" In answering these questions we must inevitably pay great attention to tone and manner, among other things, for the act of writing is necessarily one of self-commitment

* These points are directly relevant to Trilling's defense of his remark about the importance of fads in the history of culture: "The English middle classes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fell prey to a fad of Bible-reading and theological radicalism . . . but before they passed beyond our comprehension, they changed the social and cultural fabric of England and helped create the social and cultural fabric of America." If Oliver Cromwell was the product of a "fad," then so were Robespierre and Lenin, and everything in human history is as insignificant as everything else.

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—or self-inculpation, if that is the word to be used here; it can never be anything else. Of course, the paradox of art is that the more completely a man commits himself to his work the more impersonal the result will ultimately appear to be: impersonal only in the sense that it will be the truth, and not the self transmitting it, that appears to make the effect. But no shortcuts to that effect are possible.

Ideally, no shortcuts are open to the reader either. An affirmative answer to the question, "Is it true for him?" should involve the realization that precisely because it is true for him, it cannot be true for me; not in any simple or direct way.

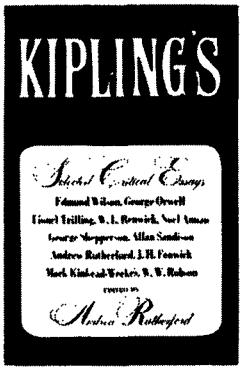
The truths Professor Trilling presented in *The Liberal Imagination* have long been of help and guidance to many readers. The evidence of much of the new book suggests, sadly enough, that Trilling himself hardly believes this will be the case with *Beyond Culture.*

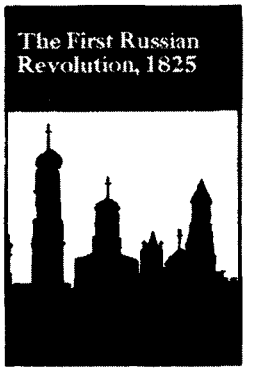
URBAN RENEWAL: TWO VIEWS

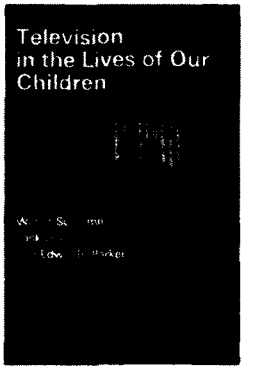
THE CITY IS THE FRONTIER. By CHARLES ABRAMS. *Harper & Row. 394pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by EDWARD C. BANFIELD

IN 1960 the Ford Foundation made grants of $25,000 each to ten authorities on housing and planning, in order to induce them to set down their thoughts on urban renewal. One of the ten was Charles Abrams, a former chairman of the New York State Rent Commission and the State Commission Against Discrimination, and now the chairman of the city planning department of Columbia University. *The City is the Frontier* is his report. He has placed chapters on general city problems fore and aft, but the book is mainly about renewal. Although it contains a good many facts and figures, it is—as the foundation intended it to be—essentially a "think piece" and not a systematic empirical study. Incidentally, none of the other grantees seems to have come up with anything publishable, so apparently Mr. Abrams's book is all that the foun-







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dation is going to get for its money.

If I did not know better, I would think that there are two Mr. Abramses—one very hard-nosed and the other very soft-nosed—and that this book is the result of a hasty and difficult collaboration between them. The first half of the book was obviously written by H. N. Abrams. He says that the urban-renewal program was ill-conceived from the start ("a statutory absurdity") in that it assumed that tearing down the houses of the poor in a time of housing shortage would somehow improve matters. In its first five years, he says, renewal "could not get off the ground." When it did, it became a get-rich-quick scheme ("a whole web of deceptions was spun"). The few houses that were built were generally drab, some of the projects were badly designed or located ("worse than the owner-occupied slums they replaced"), and some of the well-designed ones (including one by Mies van der Rohe) defaulted for lack of buyers or even renters. The "most shameful" aspect of the program, however, has been its treatment of the poor that it displaced. Relocation practices have improved somewhat under Messrs. Weaver and Slayton, according to H. N. Abrams, but the Urban Renewal Administration still approves sites that are "chockfull of home-hungry Negroes at the dawn of a new day or elderly poor in the evening of their lives." Unofficial estimates—he does not say whose—are that two million more households will be displaced in the next eight years. Renewal, H. N. Abrams concludes, is now mainly for the benefit of the renewers, the department-store owners, the owners of downtown real estate, city officials looking for new revenue, and people who want to see the central cities reoccupied by the white middle class. "As the situation stood in 1965," he says, "nest-feathering was in the ascendant, while social purpose was being moved into the background."

As FOR the housing situation in general, H. N. Abrams suggests that it would be no worse if the federal government had stayed out of the picture. He points out that way back in 1925, before any federal aid was thought of, the housing industry built 937,000 homes, and he remarks that in the course of 40 years it probably could have increased its output by 50 per cent—all that would have been needed—without federal programs.

S. N. Abrams takes over at about the half-way point with a chapter on the "blessings" of renewal. He ticks off twelve of these. Some turn out to be hoped-for rather than real (for example, renewal might be—but so far has not been—used to correct errors in city layout, to relieve traffic problems, and to beautify the city) and others turn out to be highly intangible ("if renewal has accomplished nothing else, it has stimulated a new interest in cities"). S. N. Abrams does not say what relative weights he attaches to these blessings or to the ones that are, allegedly, both real and tangible (for example, impetus to civic and cultural improvements, buttressing interest of religious institutions, spur to institutional expansion, inducement to industry, rebuilding downtown, provider of high-rental housing, and prop for low-priced housing). H. N. Abrams remarks that a society growing in wealth as fast as ours has in the last few years would have enjoyed many of these blessings anyway, but this point seems to have been lost on his collaborator.

S. N. Abrams wants to impress the reader with the full extent of the urban problem; here and there his zeal to make things look bad causes him to misrepresent the facts. Immigration quotas cannot have changed the character of the cities as much as he suggests, for immigration was not "virtually halted" in the 1920's: there were 4,107,309 immigrants in that decade and 2,514,479 in the 1950's. The cities' "springs of revenue" are not "drying up": city revenues more than doubled between 1952 and 1962. The cities have not been as neglectful in the matter of parks as he leads the reader to suppose: municipal park acreage rose from 201,067 in 1930 to 362,935 in 1960. If the cities are going to pot, it is not for lack of immigrants, revenues, and parks.

The real issue, S. N. Abrams decides, is not whether renewal has done more good than harm but whether its faults can be corrected. They can be, he says. The "fundamental weakness" of renewal is that it assumes the central cities are sound for investment whereas in fact they are not. It follows that the way to make the renewal program work is first to make the central cities sound for investment; in other words, first make them attractive places in which to live—solve their general problems—and then renewal will be a constructive tool for assembling land, replanning, and providing amenities. In order to bring about this rebirth of the central cities, Congress must provide a vast amount of assistance, including interest-free loans and such other subsidies as may be necessary to enable all families to buy new houses. (Why to *buy*? And why *new* ones?) But in order for Congress to be brought to do all this, there must first be a change in the national attitude toward our central cities that will encourage "the building of an urban America consistent with our wealth, our leadership, and our stature in the world."

Essentially, then, the argument is that to make renewal work we must first solve the general problems of the city and that to do this we must first have a change of national attitude. This is like telling a man who has been taking Bromo Seltzer for hangovers without effect that the way to make the Bromos work is first to get rid of the hangovers, and that this is to be done by reforming his character.

I DO not think that the public is likely to reform itself and to become wise and virtuous in order to make renewal work. Suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that it did. I believe that its very wisdom and virtue would then prevent it from acting upon the rest of S. N. Abrams's advice. It would then see what Bernard Frieden so clearly showed in *The Future of Old Neighborhoods* (a work not cited by Mr. Abrams, incidentally), namely, that the central cities are a good deal sounder for private investment than is generally realized. It would dismiss as preposterous the idea of building new houses in the suburbs for all who are "bleed-

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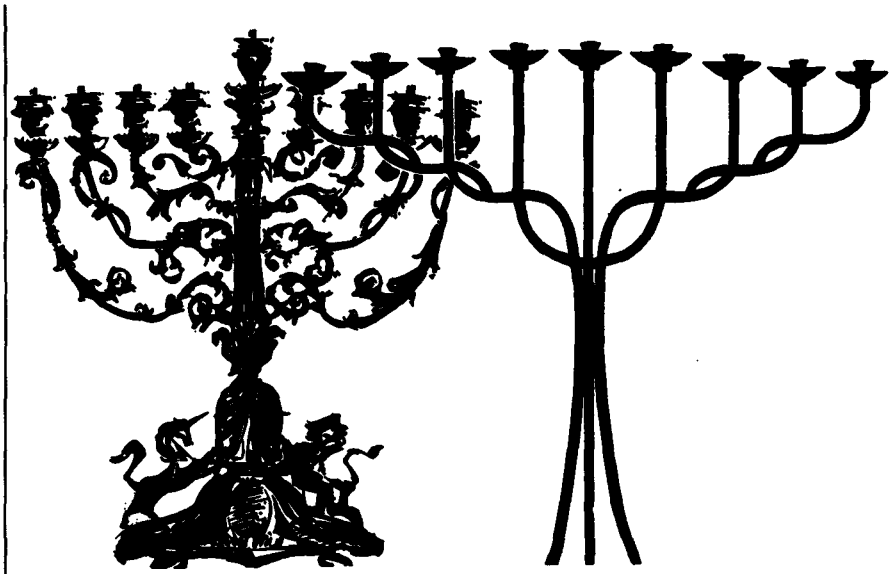
ing themselves to pay their rent" so long as there exists a huge inventory of structurally sound housing in the central cities. (H. N. Abrams remarks that "countless" houses are "wasting away" in the central cities for lack of takers.) It would see to it that income is distributed justly and that racial prejudice does not impair the working of the housing market, and then it would let the private market do the rest. As H. N. Abrams so abundantly shows, the federal government has made good matters bad and bad matters worse with almost everything that it has done in the city. A wise and virtuous public opinion would not be unmindful of this record.

COSMIC RELIGION

ON THE KABBALAH AND ITS SYMBOLISM. By GERSHOM G. SCHOLEM. translated by RALPH MANHEIM. *Schocken. 216 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by MIRCEA ELIADE

AFTER *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1941), the selections from the *Zohar,* and *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (1960), this translation of Professor Scholem's essays on the rituals and symbolism of the Kabbalah is most timely. The titles of the five chapters suffice to convey to the reader the vastness of the areas covered: "Religious Authority and Mysticism"; "The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism"; "Kabbalah and Myth"; "Tradition and New Creation in the Ritual of the Kabbalists"; "The Idea of the Golem." So far as I can recall, four of these chapters were delivered as lectures at the *Eranos* symposia in Ascona. The German edition of the book appeared in 1960 and two years later was followed by another collection of *Eranos* essays: *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit. Studien zu Grundbegriffen der Kabbala* ("Of the Mystical Figure of the Divinity: Studies in the Basic Concepts of the Kabbalah"). Also in 1962, *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala* ("Origin and Beginnings of the



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Kabbalah") was published in Berlin. It is to be hoped that these volumes will shortly be translated into English, together with Professor Scholem's *magnum opus* on *Sabbatai Zevi and the Sabbatian Movement,* published in Hebrew in 1957.

Although I am not a Hebrew scholar I am always tempted, when reading Gershom Scholem, to write a "history of ideas" type of article in connection with his works. I know that Professor Scholem does not claim for himself any merits and responsibilities other than those of a historian, namely a historian of Jewish mysticism. But it so happens that Jewish mysticism, and especially that of the Kabbalah, played—directly and even more so, indirectly—a complex and enigmatic role in the history of Christian Europe. The publication in 1941 of the famous *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* signified not only the beginning of a new era in the understanding of Kabbalah (and of many other things as well); it also closed a long epoch of repeated attempts—sometimes pathetic, sometimes naïve—to decipher the Kabbalistic world of symbols, myths, and rituals in order to make them disclose to a Christian audience a "message" of utmost importance. Scholars now agree that Kabbalah constitutes an immense problem, interesting both to the history of Jewish spirituality and to what may be called the comparative study of mysticism. But there is another and no less significant aspect of the problem: the attraction exercised by the Kabbalah upon Christian theologians, philosophers, and—especially since the end of the 18th century—upon a growing circle of writers, occultists and simply curious readers. To examine, understand, and explain this Christian *envoûtement* with the Kabbalah is a fascinating study which might one day become the subject of a very useful monograph.

As a result of the painstaking analyses of Joseph Blau, E. Abagnino, Frances A. Yates, Francois Secret, and others, we begin to understand the reasons underlying the interest in Kabbalah expressed by Italian humanists and Renaissance philosophers. They represented an effort to go beyond the "provincialism" of western Christianity, an effort which revealed a profound dissatisfaction with medieval theology and the medieval conception of man and the universe, and a longing for a universalistic, transhistorical, "mystical" religion. This is evident in the works of Pico della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno, Campanella, and other humanists and philosophers discussed by Frances Yates in her masterful book *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. Pico, at least, knew Hebrew and had studied some Kabbalistic texts in the original with a competent master. But after the 18th century, Kabbalah became "fashionable" in all kinds of circles, from freemasons and occultists to the *salons littéraires,* anthroposophists, and expressionist writers and artists. Very few of these enthusiasts knew Hebrew, but even those who did, and were able to study some of the documents in the original, did not grasp their real meaning. Before *Major Trends,* the only "scholarly" book by a contemporary Christian writer was the two-volume work *La Kabbale Juive* (1923) by Paul Vuilliaud—and one has only to read Professor Scholem's review in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (71, 1931, pp. 347-362, 444-448) to realize the shortcomings of this otherwise honest and learned author. As a matter of fact, no scholarly book could be written before Scholem's pioneering research, if only because most of the documentary materials were inaccessible. Even now, forty-two years after Scholem's edition and translation of *The Book Bahir* (Leipzig, 1923) and an amazing number of editions, historical and critical monographs—mostly by Scholem himself—the hermeneutical work is only beginning.

BUT HOW ARE we to explain the Kabbalistic vogue among Christians of such different interests and preoccupations? The general attraction to the occult is certainly too simplistic an explanation. One is tempted to discern in this phenomenon an unconscious nostalgia for a religious universe where *both* Old-Testament and mystical (gnostic) ideas coexist and are mutually enriched by their confrontation. I do not intend to go into this problem now. But if my suspicion is correct, then the Christian attraction toward Kabbalah somehow parallels a similar movement among the Jewish communities. For, as Professor Scholem has eminently proved in certain chapters of this book, the Kabbalah reintroduced "myth" and "cosmic religion" into rabbinical Judaism. This does not mean, necessarily, that the Kabbalists borrowed their symbols, rituals, and theology from foreign sources, for, as Professor Scholem writes:

> Gnosticism itself, or at least certain of its basic impulses, was a revolt, partly perhaps of Jewish origin, against anti-mythical Judaism, a late eruption of subterranean forces, which were all the more pregnant with myth for being cloaked in philosophy. In the second century of our era, classical rabbinical Judaism banished this form of heresy, seemingly for good; but in the Kabbalah this gnostic view of the world not only reemerged as a theosophical interpretation of Jewish monotheism—and this at the height of the medieval Jewish rationalism—but was able to assert itself at the center of Judaism as its most secret mystery. In the *Zohar* and in Isaac Luria, gnostic and quasi-gnostic symbols became for pious orthodox Kabbalists the profoundest expression of their Jewish faith.

In some cases the reintroduction of mythical elements may seem almost sacrilegious; for example, when the God of the *sephiroth* is symbolically identified with man in his purest form, *Adam Kadmon*. One can see in this mystical identification of God with the primordial man a new and bold theological creation parallel to, though different from, the Christian doctrine of Incarnation. No less revolutionary was the discovery of a feminine element in God (the tenth *sephirah,* identified with *Shekhinah*). As Professor Scholem writes, "this mythical conception of the feminine principle of the *Shekhinah* as a providential guide of Creation achieved enormous popularity among the masses

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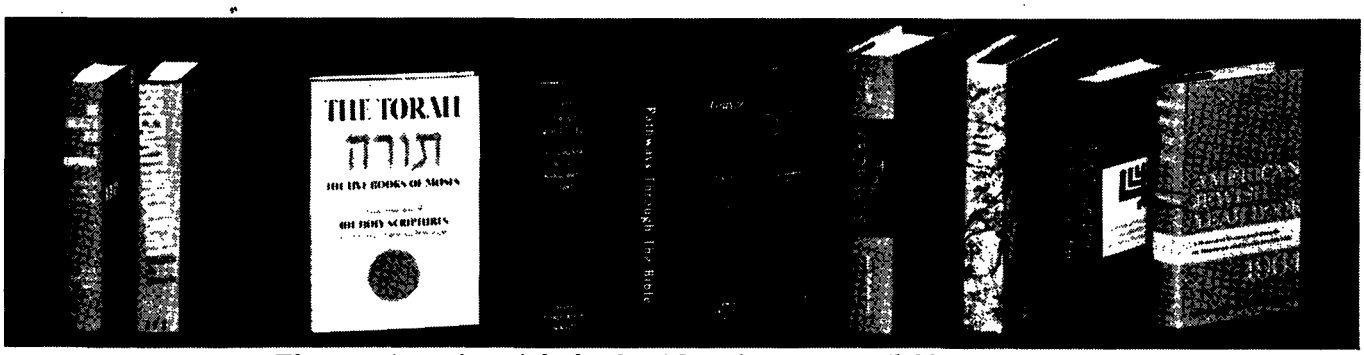

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of the Jewish people, so showing that here the Kabbalists had uncovered one of the primordial religious impulses still latent in Judaism." The ambivalence of the *Shekhinah* is expressed in age-old symbolism; the exile (*galuth*) is taken to mean that *a part of God Himself is exiled from God.* The reunion of God with His *Shekhinah* ultimately means the Redemption—the Kabbalists held that every religious act should be accompanied by the formula: this is done "for the sake of the reunion of God and His *Shekhinah.*"

With Isaac Luria of Safed, a new myth entered the Kabbalah. This myth "is concentrated in three great symbols, the *tsimtsum,* or self-limitation of God, the *shevirah,* or breaking of the vessels, and the *tikkun,* or harmonious correction and mending of the flaw which came into the world through the *shevirah.*" Thus the Lurianic Kabbalah is a great "myth of exile and redemption."

As Gershom Scholem repeatedly points out, these Kabbalistic revalorizations of gnostic and cosmic symbols, ideas, and rituals represent new and powerful religious creations. Thus, one has no right to speak of Judaism as a "closed" or even "fossilized" religion. But these daring creations and their enormous popular success constitute important problems for the historian of religions. We witness how Judaism successfully recovered some of the "cosmic sacrality" which seemed to have been irremediably lost after the rabbinical reforms. This recovery of "cosmic religion" did not mean regression to "paganism" but, on the contrary, a resanctification of cosmic life in the name, and through the power, of God. Classical Christian theology failed to attempt something similar, with the result that a "cosmic Christianity" developed and survived only among the popular and especially rural milieus of Southern and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the medieval ecclesiastical authorities persecuted this "paganism of the ignorant," and when it was tolerated it was regarded as "superstition." (And of course it became superstition, for no religious leader, no mystic, no theologian ever attempted to revalorize and reinterpret these "popular" experiences of a "cosmic Christianity.")

Pico della Mirandola was not only a great scholar, he was also a good and sincere Christian; surely he knew what he was looking for in learning Hebrew and trying to decipher and master *Magia et Caballa.*

INSIDE STORIES

THE OPINIONMAKERS. By WILLIAM L. RIVERS. *Beacon Press. 207 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by BERNARD D. NOSSITER

THE WASHINGTON correspondents of major American newspapers are, by and large, better educated and more competent than their foreign colleagues in capitals abroad. As Mr. Rivers observes, they also are often better trained than the officials about whom they write. In London, the notion that Oxbridge is as valuable as several years on the provincial press is just beginning to catch on. Things are worse in Paris where journalism is usually regarded as a launching pad for some more serious occupation. There is a comparable gap in craftsmanship. Clarity is regarded as a virtue in Washington; the arcane and unintelligible allusion dear to Continental journalism is not. Attention to detail, even trivia, is one test of a Washington correspondent's performance. This may lead to an absurd expenditure of effort to verify the precise sums provided in the minor provisions of a new bill. It is, nevertheless, more praiseworthy than the casual disdain for grubby fact and the imaginative invention of quotations that mark so much European journalism.

Having said this, it must be added that European newspapermen prize one quality that has relatively little value in Washington: independence of judgment. Most Washington reporters on most days view the world through an official optic and see issues framed in the manner of the administration in power. To be sure, Washington reporters produce their share of embarrassments, of disputes that some official wants hidden. But in general, the corps operates on the assumptions of those in executive, and sometimes legislative, office.

In the abstract, the correspondents zealously defend their right to report everything that affects the public interest. In practice, however, they turned angrily on Arthur Schlesinger for reporting President Kennedy's limited admiration for Dean Rusk. Similarly, the nominal guardians of unfettered information solemnly questioned the propriety of Senator Fulbright's attempt to correct official fictions about the intervention in the Dominican Republic. (Happily, this bureacratic vision did not inhibit some of the Washington reporters who filed from the scene.)

A taste for authoritative irrelevance is particularly marked in the area I work. Long after the macroeconomics of Keynes had become operating policy in Europe, Washington correspondents reported deadpan the preoccupations of officials obsessed with that peripheral accounting instrument, the administrative budget. In the same way, the corps generally accepted at face value the simple-minded cops-and-robbers narrative of union corruption offered by the McClellan Committee. It was beyond the practice—not the wit—of newspapermen to relate these incidents to market structures and business values.

As MR. RIVERS wisely observes, this deference has nothing to do with conventional corruption. Cash subsidies, a commonplace in the age of Jefferson and Jackson, play a marginal role in Washington. Only a handful of correspondents nowadays accept "special" writing chores from government officials, corporations, or unions. A subtler corrosion weakens the corps—the lures of "insiderism," of access and status. The joy of knowing things others don't is one of the unacknowledged if simpler attractions of newspaper work. In the same way, editors value correspondents who can quickly reach an assistant secretary or cabinet officer for a definitive and inside view of an event. Inevitably, these privileges flow in the greatest number to correspondents who are "responsible," "understanding," "sympathetic."

Just as important is the corre-

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spondent's struggle for place in the pecking order. In a city dominated by civil servants, the notion of rank is crucial. Among the newsmen, the struggle for prestige takes dozens of different forms but few of them have much to do with unconventionality. Some of the prestige marks are the frequency with which a correspondent's story is picked up or commented upon in other journals; his influence over the stories of his peers; the use of his name by officials at press conferences. Standing does not necessarily depend on compliance—witness Walter Lippmann—but in general, the correspondent's chance of being first to uncover a new policy, disclose a new appointment, or receive the other items on which editors place a high premium, depend to a considerable extent on the correspondent's amenability to the powers. Protecting sources in the Washington argot means much more than simply refusing to reveal a name. Of course, the better correspondents are never completely at one with their subjects. Status is also acquired by discomforting the establishment from time to time. But this must not be overdone or the correspondent runs the risk of being labeled "crank." A splendid recent example of such discretion was provided by the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post*. They had been the principal sources of information about the important link between the legislative process and the former Secretary to the Senate Majority. Both newspapers quietly disbanded their investigation teams the day after Mr. Johnson became President.

William Rivers, who worked for the *Reporter* magazine and as a Congressional assistant in Washington, is shrewd and knowing about the capital press corps. He rightly underlines Washington's incestuous quality. It is a one-industry town in which correspondents and officials work and play in a narrow circle. Any administration has infinite opportunities to impose its view of things and every administration exploits them. If a reporter explains its position in writing often enough, he tends to absorb it. This same phenomenon infects diplomats and correspondents working abroad, producing the disease

LEADING CONTENDERS

National Book Awards

ON TUESDAY, MARCH 15, the five winners of 1966 National Book Awards will be announced in a presentation ceremony at Philharmonic Hall in New York. Meanwhile, these are among the books by American authors published in the United States in 1965 which the judges regard as among the most distinguished:

FICTION

PETER MATTHIESSEN / At Play in the Fields of the Lord / Random House
KATHERINE ANNE PORTER / The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter / Harcourt, Brace and World
JAMES MERRILL / The (Diblos) Notebook / Atheneum
FLANNERY O'CONNOR / Everything That Rises Must Converge / Farrar, Straus and Giroux
JESSE HILL FORD / The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones / Atlantic-Little, Brown
HARRY PETRAKIS / Pericles on 31st Street / Quadrangle Books

Judges: Paul Horgan, J. F. Powers, Glenway Wescott

ARTS AND LETTERS

LIONEL TRILLING / Beyond Culture / The Viking Press
RENÉ WELLEK / A History of Modern Criticism / Yale University Press
PHILIP RAHV / The Myth and the Powerhouse / Farrar, Straus and Giroux
JANET FLANNER (GENET) / Paris Journal 1944-1965 / Atheneum
ALFRED KAZIN / Starting Out in the Thirties / Atlantic-Little, Brown
R. W. B. LEWIS / Trials of the Word / Yale University Press

Judges: Francis Fergusson, Walter Kerr, Norman Holmes Pearson

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG / Coming of Age in America / Random House
CHARLES FRANKEL / The Love of Anxiety / Harper and Row
ALICE KIMBALL SMITH / A Peril and a Hope / University of Chicago Press
BENTLEY GLASS / Science and Ethical Values / University of North Carolina Press

Judges: John Kenneth Galbraith, Ernest Nagel, James R. Newman

POETRY

W. H. AUDEN / About the House / Random House
JAMES DICKEY / Buckdancer's Choice / Wesleyan University Press
RANDALL JARRELL / The Lost World / The Macmillan Company
IRVING FELDMAN / The Pripet Marshes / The Viking Press
ELIZABETH BISHOP / Questions of Travel / Farrar, Straus and Giroux
RICHARD EBERHART / Selected Poems / New Directions
LOUIS SIMPSON / Selected Poems / Harcourt, Brace and World

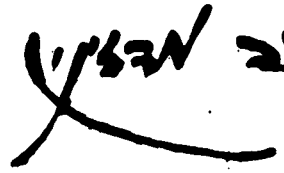
Judges: Ben Belitt, Phyliss McGinley, Elder Olson

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

IRVING BRANT / The Bill of Rights / The Bobbs-Merrill Co.
EDWARD CHASE KIRKLAND / Charles Francis Adams, Jr. / Harvard University Press
ROBERT SHAPLEN / The Lost Revolution / Harper and Row
THEODORE H. WHITE / The Making of the President 1964 / Atheneum
RICHARD B. MORRIS / The Peacemakers / Harper and Row
ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR. / A Thousand Days / Houghton Mifflin and Co.

Judges: Julian P. Boyd, Lyman Butterfield, Louis Fischer

The National Book Awards are administered by the National Book Committee, a non-profit educational association. The awards consist of five $1,000 prizes donated by the American Book Publishers Council, the American Booksellers Association, and the Book Manufacturers' Institute.



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the State Department calls "localitis." In effect, reporters in Washington and elsewhere confront a Hobson's choice: range widely and sacrifice intimate feel, or else gain intimacy and sacrifice independence.

IN HIS BOOK of loosely connected essays, Mr. Rivers touches on many of these points with a pungent intelligence. Some of his individual judgments seem odd—the inclusion of Meg Greenfield of the *Reporter* in a list of influential generalists and the omission of Philip Potter of the Baltimore *Sun;* the suggestion that *Time* magazine has taught reporters how to put news in perspective. But these are details. More questionable is Mr. Rivers's ambiguity toward the spurious issue of "news management." All governments color events to suit their needs, and lie from time to time. The frequent show of dismay over this fact of life is one of the innocent charms of the Washington corps. In the first part of his book, Mr. Rivers rightly dismisses as "absurd" the idea that there is anything new in this practice. But in two later essays, he barely hides his moral disapproval at the techniques employed by Eisenhower and Johnson and appears to think he must defend similar tactics employed by Kennedy, a President he likes. His book is also padded out with conventional and admiring accounts of Lippmann, Reston, the New York *Times,* and David Brinkley. All are useful institutions but of very different degrees of worth. Mr. Rivers sometimes accepts at its own evaluation the status order about which he writes more discerningly elsewhere.

At bottom, lack of relevance rather than compliance may be the chief shortcoming of an otherwise generally talented group of men. Officials' concerns are necessarily limited to the unavoidable. Reporters must necessarily report on these concerns. But there is no iron law prohibiting the corps from reporting them with the detachment and perspective of, say, *Le Monde* or the essayists in the *Financial Times* of London. More than it cares to admit, the Washington corps manages the news for its own convenience and that of its official clients.

LENIN'S RUSSIA

THE BOLSHEVIKS. By ADAM ULAM. *Macmillan. 598 pp. $9.95.*
RUSSIA AND HISTORY'S TURNING POINT. By ALEXANDER KERENSKY. *Duell, Sloan & Pierce. 558 pp. $8.95.*
THE MIND AND FACE OF BOLSHEVISM. By RENÉ FÜLOEP-MILLER. *Harper Torchbook. $2.95.*

Reviewed by WALTER LAQUEUR

"LENIN IS more alive than all those living now," read a huge government placard I spotted in the center of a Soviet city. It was an interesting slogan, rather mystical for a party that has inscribed atheism and scientific materialism in capital letters on its banner. But quite apart from whether the belief in the eternal character of Lenin's mission can be squared with scientific materialism, the slogan is certainly a typical illustration of the central importance that Lenin and everything concerning him still retains in the Soviet Union. Lenin's birthday and the day of his death are still among the most important anniversaries. "Lenin collections" are still put out almost every year, though one would think that the bottom of the barrel had been scraped long ago. But somehow, books keep turning up from all over that Lenin read at one time or another, with the notes that he made pencilled in the margins. Lenin as an authority on all things ideological is quoted as often as, if not more frequently than, ever before. There are admittedly good practical reasons for this, since most of Lenin's contemporaries and successors, from Trotsky, Bukharin, and Stalin to Khrushchev, are unquotable. It is, needless to say, much wiser for a Soviet historian or economist writing in 1966 to quote Lenin than, for example, Kosygin or Brezhnev, for Lenin's place in history is secure, his authority cannot possibly be affected by anything that may conceivably happen this year or the next. There is a museum right at the corner of Red Square devoted to the history of the October revolution which is virtually consecrated to the life of Lenin; one of its rooms, for instance, con-

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tains the Rolls Royce Lenin drove in 1921, another has samples of handicraft work done by the "pioneers" in a remote Ural village. The visitor is bound to reach the conclusion that Lenin prepared and carried out the revolution of 1917 almost single-handedly.

YET THE cult of the individual was part of the Russian tradition long before Stalin, and this adoration of Lenin is not of recent origin. It started during his lifetime—though Lenin, who was not at all a vain man, did nothing to encourage it—and was given fitting expression in the decision in 1924 to embalm Lenin rather than to bury him.

One must realize moreover—and this is a very important point indeed—that much of this adulation is spontaneous; there was little need for encouragement from above. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that many Soviet citizens, and especially the younger ones among them, have developed considerable sales resistance to the official propaganda put out by, and on behalf of, the various government and party agencies. They may talk with irreverence of Stalin, of Khrushchev, and even occasionally of some who have not yet been relegated to the dustbin of history. But most of them will no more doubt the infinite wisdom and goodness of Lenin than would Luther, for all his hostility to the Pope, have doubted the wisdom and goodness of God. The cult of Lenin has become an intrinsic part of the Soviet national consciousness as well as of Soviet folklore; he is at one and the same time their supreme hero and their chief symbol.

Nor should Western students of the Soviet scene be put off by this cult, for the simple reason that Lenin's importance was indeed very great. He did not, of course, create the Russian revolutionary movement, and his influence on it before 1917 was not even remotely as decisive as present-day Soviet historiography would like to have it. Nor was he a very original thinker; his knowledge of history, economics, philosophy, etc., ranged wide but was not very deep. He

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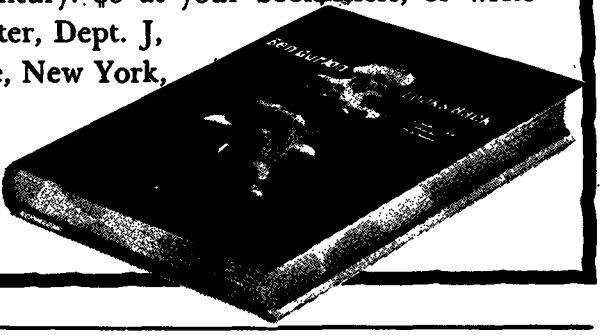

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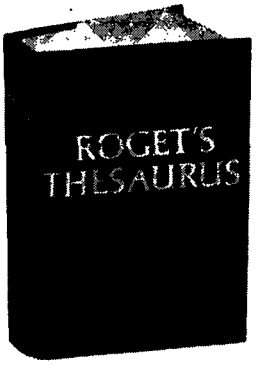

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did, however, possess an almost unfailing political instinct; and it was mainly owing to this instinct and to his characteristic tenacity and singlemindedness that the Bolsheviks prevailed over their rivals in November 1917. And since that victory was the most important turning point of the first half of the 20th century, what does it matter in retrospect that Lenin was not also—as is now claimed in the Soviet Union—the world's greatest philosopher? What happened in Russia in the decades after his death was largely shaped by Lenin's ideas of how the Communist party should be organized, and how the Soviet Union ought to be ruled.

EXAMPLES OF the Lenin literature in the Soviet Union can now be counted in tens of thousands of items, without mentioning the many films ("Lenin in October," "The Man with a Rifle," "The Blue Exercise Book," etc.), and the innumerable pictures (Lenin with Gorky, Lenin in hiding in Finland, Lenin with his dog, Lenin convalescing, and so forth). But except for the collections of stories about his life that are used as textbooks in the elementary schools, there is not to this day a Lenin biography. During the 30's and 40's a *Short Outline* of his life was available, but it had been produced primarily in order to prove that Stalin was Lenin's legitimate successor. Nor—apart from Bertram Wolfe's book on Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, which remains unfinished—were there any serious studies in the West until 1964, the fortieth anniversary of his death, when a whole spate of Lenin biographies suddenly appeared; of these, however, only Louis Fischer's was of real interest.

Professor Adam B. Ulam's publishers seem to have feared that the public was already surfeited with Lenin biographies, and someone therefore decided to call his biography of Lenin *The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual, Personal and Political History of the Origins of Russian Communism*. But that is a gross misnomer, for Professor Ulam deals almost exclusively with one Bolshevik, namely Lenin, and *his* intellectual, personal, and political history. And he does so in a masterly way—this is the best Lenin biography so far.

Ulam describes, as many a writer before him has, Lenin's family background, and his years in exile and abroad; he provides a competent sketch of the Russian revolutionary tradition in the second half of the 19th century and then proceeds to the main part of the book—Lenin's political activities from the time he joined the Russian Social-Democratic movement up to the day of his death. There are some minor irritations—was it really necessary to give all the titles of books and periodicals in English (and only in English)? Only very well-informed students of the period will be able to use references of this kind. Nor is the announcement on the dust jacket that much material contained in the book is being published for the first time very relevant. There are, for all one knows, bits and pieces of interesting information in the Trotsky archives at Harvard and scraps of evidence published from time to time in Soviet historical journals that were used by the author. But this evidence, gathered during the last decade, amounts to very little, and does not at all affect our image of Lenin. Professor Ulam has not made any startling new discoveries; he has studied all the available historical evidence and produced a well-written, intelligent, and balanced book in which, refreshingly perhaps for a work of this character, he quotes not only the proceedings of the Central Committee but also the sayings of Mr. Leo Durocher.

BOTH LENIN and Alexander Kerensky were born in Simbirsk, a town on the middle Volga. At this point, however, the similarity between them ends. Kerensky, a few years younger than Lenin, became a lawyer and joined one of the more moderate groups of the Russian socialist movement. After the February revolution of 1917, he was propelled for a short while onto the very center of the political stage, first as Minister of Justice of the Provisional Government, then as Minister for War and the Navy, and ultimately, in July 1917, as Prime Minister of Russia. But in November 1917, he was deposed by the Bolsheviks. Since then, Mr. Kerensky has been living in Paris and the United States and now, in his eighty-fifth year, he has tried to recapture some of the spirit of those turbulent days and to reevaluate the political events from the perspective of five decades. Unfortunately, his book is not a great success.

Kerensky no doubt has an interesting story to tell; had he stuck strictly to autobiography, and made his narrative as detailed as possible, it would have constituted an important source for the understanding of what he rightly calls "history's turning point." But, alas, human memories grow dim after several decades and most of what Mr. Kerensky has to say about the subject was already said in his three previous books, published between 1921 and 1934, as well as in many other works. Since there are no longer any "now it can be told" stories left to tell, we are treated to a fairly conventional, somewhat vague, and by no means complete, description of the year of decision.

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RENÉ FÜLOEP-MILLER'S *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* first appeared in German in 1926, and was translated into English the following year. It was one of the first really ambitious attempts to describe the new Soviet culture and, generally speaking, the whole quality of life in Soviet Russia—the efforts to revolutionize daily life, the new developments in the Russian language as a result of the revolution, changes in the family, and so on. The book contained many shrewd observations as well as some glaring misinterpretations; above all, it was far too preoccupied with religious issues, such as the rebirth of Russian mysticism that allegedly took place under the Bolshevik regime. Who still remembers "onomatodoxy" (the idea of the magic power of God's name), a teaching that was adopted, according to Füloep-Miller, by a great part of the intelligentsia and a sizable section of the peasantry at the time? Though the book did make a useful contribution by disseminating factual information about life in the Soviet Union—a subject on which the wildest ideas were prevalent—it tended at the same time to perpetuate the myth of the Russian soul, and especially in Germany. And finally, without disrespect to the author, it must be said that the best thing in his book were its illustrations, hundreds of them—cartoons, reproductions of contemporary Soviet periodicals, atheist propaganda placards, constructivist and suprematist drawings—which conveyed much more effectively than lengthy analysis could, the *Zeitgeist* of 1926. Unfortunately, only a small portion of these pictures has been reproduced in this new edition.

MR. FÜLOEP-MILLER'S book makes engaging reading as a period piece. It was written toward the end of the early, experimental period in Soviet cultural life when Russian artists, not always to the delight of the public, were being permitted to probe new frontiers in literature and music, in painting, architecture, and the cinema. This period did not yield great masterpieces, but it was certainly a more interesting one than the wasteland

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which followed. These were the years when children were named *Konstitutsia, Revoliutsia,* and *Comintern* (what became of them all?), when the attempt was made to drop the word for "thank you" (*spassibo*) because its literal derivation was "God protect you." It was the time, too, of America-worship, when the Bolsheviks dreamed of turning their country into a new and more splendid Chicago, as reflected, for instance in a Mayakovski poem:

Chicago: City
Built upon a screw!
Electro-dynamo-mechanical city!
Spiral shaped—
On a steel disc—
At every stroke of the hour
Turning around itself—
Five thousand sky-scrapers—
Granite suns!

But it was also the time when Sholokhov wrote *The Quiet Don* and when Eisenstein's *Potemkin* was first shown. The grotesque disparity (to quote Füloep-Miller) between the aims of the Bolsheviks and the preliminary conditions laid down for their attainment, was probably the most characteristic feature of that period. In the cultural field the disparity was no less striking between a very enterprising avant-garde and the large section of the population that was still illiterate. This period (and this disparity) came to an end shortly after the original publication of this book; both the avant-garde and the illiterates disappeared. What also happened between 1926 and 1963 is told by the author in a 35-page postscript, which is either too short or too long to provide adequate coverage.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DAN JACOBSON's *new novel,* The Beginners, *has just been published by Macmillan; among his other novels* are The Trap, The Price of Diamonds, *and* Evidence of Love. *Mr. Jacobson has contributed fiction and criticism regularly to* COMMENTARY *for more than a decade.*

EDWARD C. BANFIELD *is professor of government at Harvard University. A specialist in urban affairs, Mr. Banfield is the co-author, with Martin Meyerson, of* Politics, Planning and the Public Interest *(The Free Press of Glencoe), among other books. This is his first contribution to these pages.*

MIRCEA ELIADE, *another new contributor, is professor of the history of religion at the University of Chicago and a leading authority on mysticism.*

BERNARD D. NOSSITER, *who is also appearing for the first time in* COMMENTARY, *was a member of the Washington press corps for eight years as a writer on economic affairs for the Washington* Post.

WALTER LAQUEUR *is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and editor of* Survey. *His latest book is* Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict *(Little, Brown), and his most recent essay in* COMMENTARY *was "Bonn, Cairo, Jerusalem: The Triple Crisis" (May 1965).*

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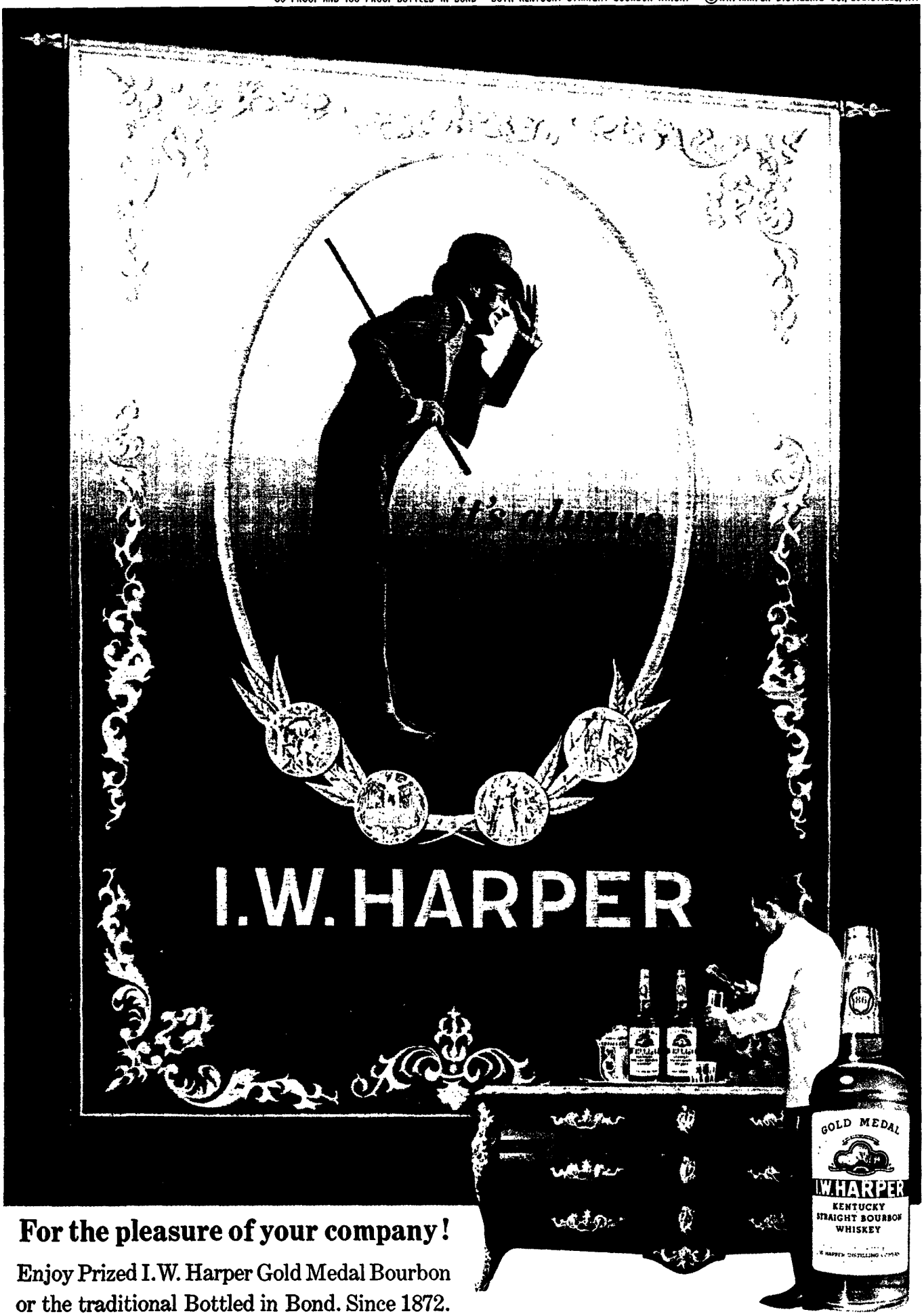

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